Indian Round Table Conference

(SECOND SESSION)

7th September, 1931—1st December, 1931

PROCEEDINGS

OF THE

PLENARY SESSIONS

Presented by the Secretary of State for India to Parliament by Command of His Majesty. January, 1932.

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INDIAN ROUND TABLE CONFERENCE

(SECOND SESSION).

INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

The first Session of the Indian Round Table Conference was held between 12th November, 1930, and 19th January, 1931. The proceedings were presented to Parliament in Cmd. 3778 of 1931. The second Session of the Conference, with which this present volume is concerned, was held between 7th September and 1st December, 1931. Thirty-one additional members were appointed to the Conference for its second Session. In accordance with paragraphs 2 and 3 of the agreement reached on the 5th March, 1931, between His Excellency the Viceroy and Mr. Gandhi, the Indian National Congress was represented, Mr. Gandhi attending as the sole representative.

2. The second Session did not open with a meeting of the full Conference. The Federal Structure Committee was reassembled on the 7th September and the Minorities Committee on the 28th September, followed by a Plenary Session beginning on the 28th November, 1931. The other Committees of the Conference were not reassembled. The personnel of the Federal Structure Committee and Minorities Committee was somewhat enlarged.

3. The Lord Chancellor placed before the Federal Structure Committee the following Heads for further consideration in continuation of their deliberations at the first Session:—

(1) Strength and composition of the Federal Legislature, including the proportions in each Chamber to be assigned to the States and to British India respectively.

(2) Direct and indirect methods of election.

(3) Relations between the two Chambers.

(4) Distribution of financial resources between the Federation and its Units.

(5) The Ministry, and its relations with the Legislature.

(6) Distribution of legislative powers between the Federal and Provincial Legislatures; effect in the States of legislation relating to Federal Subjects.

(7) Administrative relations between the Federal Government, the States and the Provinces.

(8) The Federal Court.

On Heads (1) to (4) and (8) the Committee presented a Report, which is their third Report. Owing to the failure of the Minorities

Committee to reach any solutions of the problems under their consideration (see paragraph 5 below), it was not found possible to have more than a partial discussion on heads (5) to (7) and the Committee presented no report in respect of these matters.

4. The Committee further considered the subjects of Defence (in its constitutional aspects), External Relations, Financial Safeguards and Commercial Discrimination, and presented its fourth Report dealing with these questions. As explained in the first paragraph of the fourth Report, the Committee, in discussing these subjects, did not have the advantage of hearing the views of an important section of its membership.

5. The Minorities Committee were unable to reach any agreed conclusions on the subjects under their consideration and reported to that effect in their second Report.

6. A Plenary Session of the Conference was held from 28th November to 1st December, 1931, to receive the third and fourth Reports of the Federal Structure Committee, the second Report of the Minorities Committee, and to discuss the whole field of the work of the Conference. The proceedings of the Plenary Session are given on pages 9 to 300. The Session was concluded with a declaration by the Prime Minister explaining the Government's policy (see pages 288 to 295).

7. The reports of the Sub-Committees are printed in one volume and the proceedings of these Committees in three separate volumes.

INDIAN ROUND TABLE CONFERENCE

(SECOND SESSION).

LIST OF DELEGATES.

BRITISH REPRESENTATIVES.

THE RIGHT HON. J. RAMSAY MACDONALD, M.P. (*Chairman of the Conference*).

THE RIGHT HON. WEDGWOOD BENN, D.S.O., D.F.C., M.P.

[1] MAJOR W. E. ELLIOT, M.C., M.P.

MR. ISAAC FOOT, M.P.

[1] MR. H. GRAHAM-WHITE, M.P.

[1, 2] THE RIGHT HON. VISCOUNT HAILSHAM.

SIR ROBERT HAMILTON, M.P.

[2] THE RIGHT HON. ARTHUR HENDERSON, M.P.

THE RIGHT HON. SIR SAMUEL HOARE, BART., G.B.E., C.M.G., M.P.

THE RIGHT HON. SIR WILLIAM JOWITT, K.C., M.P.

THE RIGHT HON. H. B. LEES-SMITH, M.P.

THE MOST HON. THE MARQUESS OF LOTHIAN, C.H.

THE RIGHT HON. EARL PEEL, G.B.E.

[1] MR. F. W. PETHICK-LAWRENCE, M.P.

THE MOST HON. THE MARQUESS OF READING, G.C.B., G.C.S.I., G.C.I.E., G.C.V.O.

THE RIGHT HON. LORD SANKEY, G.B.E.

[1] THE LORD SNELL.

MAJOR THE HON. OLIVER STANLEY, M.C., M.P.

[2] THE RIGHT HON. J. H. THOMAS, M.P.

THE MOST HON. THE MARQUESS OF ZETLAND, G.C.S.I., G.C.I.E.

INDIAN STATES' REPRESENTATIVES.

[2] COLONEL HIS HIGHNESS THE MAHARAJA OF ALWAR, G.C.S.I., G.C.I.E.

HIS HIGHNESS THE MAHARAJA GAEKWAR OF BARODA, G.C.S.I., G.C.I.E.

LIEUTENANT-COLONEL HIS HIGHNESS THE NAWAB OF BHOPAL, G.C.I.E., C.S.I., C.V.O.

LIEUTENANT-GENERAL HIS HIGHNESS THE MAHARAJA OF BIKANER, G.C.S.I., G.C.I.E., G.C.V.O., G.B.E., K.C.B., A.D.C.

[1] HIS HIGHNESS THE MAHARAO OF CUTCH, G.C.S.I., G.C.I.E.

---

[1] Additional Delegate appointed for Second Session.
[2] Did not attend the Second Session.

INDIAN STATES' REPRESENTATIVES (*contd.*).

LIEUTENANT-COLONEL HIS HIGHNESS THE MAHARAJ RANA OF DHOLPUR, G.C.I.E., K.C.S.I., K.C.V.O.

[1] HIS HIGHNESS THE MAHARAJA OF INDORE.

[2] COLONEL HIS HIGHNESS THE MAHARAJA OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR, G.C.I.E., K.C.V.O.

[1] COLONEL HIS HIGHNESS THE MAHARAJA OF KAPURTHALA, G.C.S.I., G.C.I.E., G.B.E.

[6] LIEUTENANT-COLONEL HIS HIGHNESS THE MAHARAJA OF NAWANAGAR, G.C.S.I., G.B.E.

[7] MAJOR-GENERAL HIS HIGHNESS THE MAHARAJA OF PATIALA, G.C.S.I., G.C.I.E., G.C.V.O., G.B.E., A.D.C.

HIS HIGHNESS THE MAHARAJA OF REWA, G.C.I.E., K.C.S.I.

HIS HIGHNESS THE CHIEF SAHIB OF SANGLI, K.C.I.E.

[1] THE RAJA OF KOREA.

[1] THE RAJA OF SARILA.

SIR PRABHASHANKAR PATTANI, K.C.I.E.

[8] SIR MANUBHAI NANDSHANKAR MEHTA, C.S.I.

SARDAR SAHIBZADA SULTAN AHMED KHAN, C.I.E.

NAWAB SIR MUHAMMAD AKBAR HYDARI.

[3] SIR MIRZA M. ISMAIL, C.I.E., O.B.E.

[4] COLONEL K. N. HAKSAR, C.I.E.

[1] DIWAN BAHADUR T. RAGHAVIAH, C.S.I.

[5] [1] NAWAB LIAQAT HAYAT KHAN.

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[1] MR. E. C. BENTHALL.

SIR SHAH NAWAZ KHAN GHULAM MURTAZA KHAN BHUTTO, C.I.E., O.B.E.

---

[1] Additional Delegate appointed for Second Session.
[2] Did not attend the Second Session.
[3] Also represents Jaipur and Jodhpur States.
[4] Represented H.H. the Maharaja of Jammu and Kashmir at the Second Session.
[5] Substitute Delegate for His Highness the Maharaja of Patiala.
[6] Did not attend Second Session, but was represented by Mr. L. F. Rushbrook Williams.
[7] Did not attend Second Session, but was represented by Nawab Liaqat Hayat Khan.
[8] Also represented H.H. the Maharaja of Bikaner after latter's departure.

BRITISH-INDIAN REPRESENTATIVES (*contd.*).

[1] MR. G. D. BIRLA.
[1, 2] THE RAJA OF BOBBILI.
SIR HUBERT CARR.
[3] MR. C. Y. CHINTAMANI.
CAPTAIN NAWAB SIR MUHAMMAD AHMAD SAID KHAN OF CHHITARI, K.C.I.E., M.B.E.
[1] SIR MANECKJEE DADABHOY, K.C.I.E.
[1] MAULVI MUHAMMAD SHAFI DAOODI.
MAHARAJADHIRAJA KAMESHWAR SINGH OF DARBHANGA.
[1] DR. S. K. DATTA.
CAPTAIN RAJA SHER MUHAMMAD KHAN OF DOMELI.
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[1] MR. M. K. GANDHI.
MR. A. H. GHUZNAVI.
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[1] SIR PADAMJI GINWALA.
[1] MR. V. V. GIRI.
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DIWAN BAHADUR RAJA NARENDRA NATH.
[1] SAYED MUHAMMAD PADSHAH SAHEB BAHADUR.
RAO BAHADUR A. T. PANNIR SELVAM.

---

[1] Additional delegate appointed for Second Session.
[2] Attended in place of the Raja of Parlakimedi.
[3] Did not attend the Second Session.

BRITISH-INDIAN REPRESENTATIVES (*concld.*).

[2] Raja of Parlakimedi.
Rao Bahadur Sir Annepu Parasuramadas Patro.
Nawab Sir Sahibzada Abdul Qaiyum Khan, K.C.I.E.
Diwan Bahadur M. Ramachandra Rao.
Mr. B. Shiva Rao.
Sir Sayed Sultan Ahmed.
Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, K.C.S.I.
Sir Muhammad Shafi, K.C.S.I., C.I.E.
Sardar Sampuran Singh.
The Right Hon. V. S. Srinivasa Sastri, C.H.
Sir Chimanlal Setalvad, K.C.I.E.
[2] Rai Bahadur Kunwar Bisheshwar Dayal Seth.
Sir Phiroze Sethna, O.B.E.
Dr. Shafa'at Ahmad Khan.
Begum Shah Nawaz.
M. R. Ry. Rao Bahadur Srinivasan.
Mrs. Subbarayan.
Mr. Shripad Balwant Tambe.
[1] Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas, C.I.E.
Sardar Sahib Sardar Ujjal Singh.
Sir C. E. Wood.
Mr. Zafrullah Khan.

In addition, U Aung Thin, U Ba Pe, Sir O. de Glanville and Mr. M. M. Ohn Ghine, who represented Burma on the First Session of the Conference, remained formally members of the Conference, but did not attend owing to the formation of a separate Burma Round Table Conference.

INDIAN STATES DELEGATION STAFF.

Adviser to His Highness the Maharaja Gaekwar of Baroda.
[3] Rao Bahadur Krishnama Chari, C.I.E.

Advisers to the Delegate for Hyderabad.
Lieut.-Col. Sir Richard Chenevix-Trench, C.I.E., O.B.E.
Nawab Mahdi Yar Jung.

Adviser to His Highness the Maharaja of Indore.
[4] Rai Bahadur S. M. Bapna.

Adviser for Jaipur State.
Rai Bahadur Pandit Amar Nath Atal.

---

[1] Additional Delegate appointed for Second Session.

[2] Did not attend the Second Session.

[3] Acted as substitute delegate in absence of H.H. the Maharaja Gaewkar of Baroda.

[4] Acted as substitute delegate in absence of H.H. the Maharaja of Indore.

INDIAN STATES DELEGATION STAFF (*contd.*).

Adviser for Jodhpur State.
MR. J. W. YOUNG, O.B.E.

Adviser for Kashmir State.
PANDIT RAMACHANDRA KAK.

Adviser for Rampur State.
SAHIBZADA ABDUS SAMAD KHAN, C.I.E.

Adviser for the Orissa States.
MR. K. C. NEOGY.

Advisers nominated by the Chamber of Princes Special Organisation.
[1] MR. L. F. RUSHBROOK WILLIAMS, C.B.E.
[2] SIRDAR JARMANI DASS, O.B.E.

Secretariat.
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MR. K. M. PANIKKAR.
MR. N. MADHAVA RAO.

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MR. K. S. FITZE, I.C.S.
MR. J. G. LAITHWAITE (personally attached to the Prime Minister).
MR. W. H. LEWIS, C.I.E., I.C.S.
MR. P. J. PATRICK.

PROF. J. COATMAN, C.I.E. (Secretary to the Liberal Delegation).
MR. G. T. GARRATT (Secretary to the Opposition Labour Delegation).
MR. R. J. STOPFORD (Secretary to the Conservative Delegation).

BRITISH INDIAN DELEGATION STAFF.

Secretaries.
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MR. A. LATIFI, O.B.E., I.C.S.
MR. G. S. BAJPAI, C.I.E., C.B.E., I.C.S.
MR. B. RAMA RAU, C.I.E., I.C.S.

---

[1] Acted as substitute delegate in absence of H.H. the Maharaja of Nawanagar.

[2] Acted as substitute delegate in absence of H.H. the Maharaja of Kapurthala.

BRITISH INDIAN DELEGATION STAFF—(*contd.*).

Additional Staff (Honorary).

SAYED AMJAD ALI.
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MR. MAHADEO DESAI.
PANDIT GOVIND MALAVIYA.
PANDIT R. K. MALAVIYA.
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Additional (Honorary).

SAYED AMJAD ALI.
MR. RAM BABU SAKSENA, U.P.C.S.

PLENARY SESSION, 28th NOVEMBER, 1931.

Chairman : This meeting of the Plenary Session has been called according to the notice to receive the Third and Fourth Reports of the Federal Structure Committee and the Second Report of the Minorities Committee, and to discuss the whole field of the work of the Conference. I will therefore ask the Lord Chancellor to present his two Reports, the Third and the Fourth.

Lord Sankey : Prime Minister, Ladies and Gentlemen, some day I hope to visit India; and when it is my good fortune to do so, I propose to go straight to see that magnificent building, the Taj at Agra. What time, what thought, what patience, were spent upon it; and with what result!—A wonder of the world and a building worthy of India. We are now engaged upon a building. What time, what thought, what patience it requires. Let us make it worthy of India.

Mr. Chairman, it is customary at the erection of all stately edifices to make plans and to assemble the materials before you start to build. This is the task upon which the Federal Structure Committee has been engaged. There have been many willing workers, everyone of whom has contributed his share. It has fallen to my lot to give, I hope, some help in the matter, because I have been, as it were, a Clerk of the Works. We have also had a very able and experienced foreman. Like all good foremen, he has been a little peremptory at times; but he has always given us good advice, has always told us what are the best plans and where the material ought to be put. We have generally obeyed him. Let me place on record our obligations to our foreman, Sir Tej Sapru.

Now, Sir, we have come to place before you the reports of our labours. You too have a part to play in the building. We are all looking forward to the declaration that you are to make on Tuesday next, and, if you will allow me to say so, I hope—more than that—I believe that you will be remembered not only as a Prime Minister of Great Britain but as the architect of the Federal Constitution of India.

Now, Ladies and Gentlemen, will you kindly take in your hands the Third Report of the Federal Structure Committee. I need only detain you for a very few minutes, because I know that there are many of you who wish to address us for the first time. The First Report contains, as you will see if you look at the index, sections dealing with the structure, size and composition of the Federal Legislature, with the apportionment between the States of their quota; the method of selection of States' representatives in the Lower Chamber; the representation of special interests in the Federal Legislature; nominated members; the qualifications and disqualifications for membership; the oath of allegiance; the rela-

tions between the two Chambers; Federal Finance; and the Federal Court. I formally move the adoption of that and the other Reports to which I will draw your attention in a few brief sentences. But I want to draw your attention to four paragraphs, and those are the only four paragraphs in all the Reports that I desire to refer to. You will observe in paragraph 1 on page 5 what the Committee's task was. The Committee's task was to continue the discussions at the point at which they were left by their Report of the 13th January and the Prime Minister's declaration of the 19th January.

I now want to draw your attention to paragraph 6:—

> " It will be easy for the constitutional purist, citing federal systems in widely different countries, to point out alleged anomalies in the plans which the Committee have to propose to this great end; but the Committee, as they stated in their First Report, are not dismayed by this reflection. Their proposals are the outcome of an anxious attempt to understand, to give full weight to, and to reconcile different interests."

The only other two paragraphs are 8 and 9, and then I shall have finished this Report. Paragraph 8 says:—

> " Without a spirit of compromise, such diverging interests cannot be reconciled; but compromise inevitably produces solutions which to some, if not to all, of the parties may involve the sacrifice of principle."

Then paragraph 9 goes on:—

> " It follows that, in many cases, many members of the Committee would have preferred some solution other than that which appears as their joint recommendation."

Now comes this important sentence which I desire to impress upon all of you:—

> " But recognising that the basic aim of this Conference is, by the pooling of ideas and by the willingness to forego for the common good individual desires, to attain the greatest measure of agreement; above all, recognising that the time has come for definite conclusions, the Committee are prepared to endorse the conclusions set out in this Report."

Now will you please take in your hands the Fourth Report of the Federal Structure Committee? If you will kindly look at the index you will see that it deals with Defence, External Relations, Financial Safeguards and Commercial Discrimination. I only desire to refer to one paragraph of that Report and that is paragraph 1:—

> " The Committee, when discussing the subjects covered by this Report, *viz.*, Defence, External Relations, Financial Safeguards and Commercial Discrimination, did not have the advantage of hearing the views of the Muslim members of the British-Indian Delegation who reserved their opinion on such

> questions until such time as a satisfactory solution had been found of the problems which confronted the Minorities Committee. Some other representatives of minorities similarly reserved their opinion."

There, Ladies and Gentlemen, are the plans. There is the material. Examine them carefully. See that the plans are satisfactory. Take care that the material will stand the strain and the stresses to which it will inevitably be subjected. If you work slowly, if you work well, if you work wisely, then it is certain that the stability of your structure will be assured. I beg to move the adoption of the Reports.

Chairman: In order that the whole business may be before the Conference may I move the Second Report of the Minorities Committee? I am sorry that I must draw your attention to paragraph 6. It is very brief and I will just read it:

> " The Committee has, in these circumstances, to record with deep regret that it has been unable to reach any agreed conclusion on the difficult and controversial question which has been the subject of its deliberations."

Then in reference to paragraph 8 as regards the invitation I made to the members of the Committee to request me to take certain action on the subject, I regret to inform the Conference that the invitation and its conditions were not accepted and that, therefore, the matter of the Minorities remains as it is in this Report.

I regret it very much. I am sure every one who sat with me on that Committee will agree that we strove our very hardest to get some agreement. But I want to say now—and I say it with very definite conviction—that this problem can be solved still. It has not been solved up till now, but I am as hopeful as I was at the beginning that by further work, by the exercise of goodwill, by the facing of the actual facts of the situation, and above all by the exercise of the well-known pride of the Indian representatives, they will find a way out of this very difficult and very troublesome situation.

I move the adoption of the Report.

Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas: May I ask a question on a point of information? I wish to refer to Report No. 4, paragraph 18, where it says:—

> " The expression ' subject ' must here be understood as including firms, companies and corporations carrying on business within the area of the Federation, as well as private individuals."

May I ask the Lord Chancellor whether it would be correct to interpret this as " The expression ' subject ' must here be understood as including firms carrying on business, and companies and corporations registered in and carrying on business within the area of the Federation, as well as private individuals "?

Lord Sankey: You have been good enough to give me notice of that question, Sir Purshotamdas, and I think the answer to your question is in the affirmative. I think that will solve all difficulties.

Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas: Thank you; I think that is more clear.

Chairman: That will be reported. The general debate is now open on the two motions which have been made, one by the Lord Chancellor and the other by myself.

I shall first of all call upon the Raja of Korea.

The Raja of Korea: Mr. Prime Minister, before I say anything else I think it is my duty to tender my sincere gratitude to you, Sir, for the honour you have conferred upon me in asking me to speak first. I also wish to pay my humble tribute to, and express my great admiration of, the work of the members of the Federal Structure Committee. The task which was before them was one of infinite complexity, but the manner in which they carried it on and concluded it by their very valuable Report, under the guidance of their able and impartial Chairman, deserves our highest praise.

I also desire to express my deep regret at the failure of the Minorities Committee to come to any agreed settlement. I fully share the view that you have expressed, Sir, that the communal issues are not beyond the possibility of settlement, and that with goodwill and a spirit of compromise on both sides a solution can be reached and will be reached.

It is a unique privilege to me to participate in the discussions of this historic and august assembly, and with my two other colleagues, to advocate the cause of the smaller States. I have the honour to represent the group of States which, by a recent classification, have been placed in the second class—to which group I myself belong—and the groups of States of the third class which have no representatives of their own.

The idea of Federation, which is the central theme of the Report of the Federal Structure Committee, and which has for its object the bringing of British India and the Indian States into a closer political relationship and the strengthening of the tie which binds India to the British Empire and the British Crown, is, indeed, a very laudable one; and, speaking for the smaller States, I have no hesitation in saying that it will be their earnest endeavour to contribute to it materially, as materially and as worthily as they can, consistently with the rights and claims of their States.

At the very outset I wish to say that the smaller States claim, no less than the bigger States, that their relations are with the Crown, and that they yield to none in their devotion and loyalty to His Majesty's Government and his Royal Person.

At the present juncture, when important issues still await settlement, it would hardly be expected of me, on behalf of the smaller States, to make any definite commitments with regard to our acceptance of the federal scheme, but I believe in being optimistic, and I hope very much that, in spite of the present vital disagree-

ments on communal issues and other issues, a solution will eventually be evolved which will safeguard and promote every legitimate interest both in British India and in Indian India, and will lay the foundations of a progressive Federal India within the British Empire and under the ægis of the British Crown.

Before I enter into a discussion of the different issues that are before us, I should like, Sir, with your permission briefly to survey the position of the smaller States and dwell upon their general importance. Taking the second class States, I have to say that they number 126; they have approximately an aggregate population of 7,249,911 souls, an aggregate area of 72,603 square miles, and an aggregate revenue of Rs. 2,62,00,000. These States enjoy internal sovereignty in varying degrees, and this has resulted not so much from their inherent character or their past history as from the varying treatment they have received and the varying policies that have been pursued by their respective Local Governments. Some of these States enjoy internal autonomy of an order not inferior to some of the first class States, and in point of population, area and financial resources not a few stand even higher.

I hope, Sir, that these figures will show you that the so-called smaller States represent interests larger than they are usually credited with, and therefore they have a legitimate claim to have an effective voice in the future polity of India. I also wish to say that the remarks made by some unkind critics that they are of an insignificant character are hardly justified.

Coming to the third class States, I have to say that these number 327; they have an aggregate revenue of Rs. 70,04,000, a population of 801,674 souls and an area of 6,400 square miles. These States I very much regret to say have in the past been so much neglected that they have not yet been able to have a seat in the Chamber of Princes. These States form no part of British India; their destinies are linked with the States, and, although limited sovereignty may be exercised in those States, an opportunity has to be found for them to have their due and effective voice in any constitutional machinery that is devised and the decisions of which are likely to affect them. From their numerical strength and the variety of interests embodied in them, I think it will be conceded that they are entitled to a better recognition of their position than has hitherto been granted to them.

With this brief introduction, Sir, I now pass on to the Report of the Federal Structure Committee. I am in entire agreement with the view taken by the Indian States Delegates and by His Highness the Chancellor, in regard to the legislative machinery contemplated in that Report and accept that machinery. The standpoint of the States as advocated by His Highness of Bhopal, the Chancellor, His Highness of Bikaner and our other distinguished Ministers in regard to the proportion of seats between Indian States and British India and the method of selecting the States' representatives is also a subject on which I am in absolute harmony with the general States' view.

As regards the strength of the Houses, I have been of opinion that this should be fairly large so that the States' share of seats should provide ample scope for the representation of all the States big and small. I find that the Committee has held the view that there is a consensus of opinion which regards an Upper House of approximately two hundred seats and a Lower House of approximately three hundred seats as being chambers most suited to meet the requirements of efficiency, expedition and of economy both of time and money. In view of this I am prepared to be content with a smaller House, but I should like to emphasise the supreme necessity of examining carefully and deciding equitably the question of representation and allocation of seats. There seems, Sir, to be an opinion prevailing that the present constitution of the Chamber of Princes will provide a fair and correct basis for the construction of the States' section of the Upper Federal House, but with the greatest respect to this opinion I wish to say that the model of the Chamber of Princes will not prove acceptable to the smaller States, as at present it has not found support with the premier States.

I hope that when I make this statement with regard to the constitution of the Chamber of Princes I shall not be misunderstood. It is not my purpose to make any unnecessary observations on this subject and I will confine my remarks only to such aspects of the constitution of the Chamber as will enable me to state to you the disabilities and the anomalies under which the smaller States labour, and which disabilities and anomalies will be perpetuated in the federal constitution if this procedure is adopted. My whole object in referring to it is to show the inadequacy of the structure for providing a model for the construction of the States' section of the Upper Federal House. Before I say anything I should like to express my thankfulness to our Chancellor, His Highness of Bhopal, and other leading and distinguished Princes who have served on the Federal Structure Committee, particularly His Highness of Bikaner, for their sympathetic attitude towards the problems of the smaller States. The permanent membership of the Chamber of Princes has been primarily based on salutes and in some cases a high degree of internal autonomy has also been held to be a qualification. The financial resources of the States, their population and area have been entirely ignored and in many cases even a comparatively high degree of autonomy has failed to earn for them a permanent place in the Chamber in the absence of salutes. I should like to say, Sir, with the greatest humility that for the salutes to constitute the sole criterion or even the principal criterion in constitutional matters of such importance would be hardly right. They are associated more with the house and the Person of the Ruler and while they should have their fullest measure of importance in ceremonial I venture to think that they are not fit representatives of the character of States. Another unfortunate thing that has crept into the constitution of the Chamber of Princes is the classification of States into first, second and third class as arrived at by the Indian States Committee.

These classifications are based on the anomalies that are embodied in the constitution of the Chamber, which have been

accepted without scrutiny, and therefore they are equally erroneous and unjust. If, therefore, any solution is sought on the basis of this classification it will be, I venture to say, equally unsatisfactory and unfair to the cause of the smaller States, and it will make them extremely unwilling to join the Federation.

Another flaw in the constitution of the Chamber is, as I have said, the exclusion from it of the third class States. The Chamber is an all-India organisation of the States, and any part of India which is admittedly Indian India must have its due representation in a body whose decisions and recommendations affect it.

Here I should also like to say that the position of the third class States calls for serious consideration, and I may urge that the Government of India should be pleased to entrust their problems to an experienced officer of the Political Department for his careful examination and report.

By what I have said, Sir, I think I may have convinced you that the constitution of the Chamber of Princes will not provide a safe, just and satisfactory basis for the solution of the question of the apportionment of seats between the States *inter se* in the Upper Federal House. If, however, a contrary view is taken, and the Chamber is invested with constitutional importance and it is desired to proceed on its analogy, I must ask that its constitution should first be revised.

In regard to the Lower Federal House I have to say that there is no disagreement between us, as the allocation of seats there is rightly proposed to be made on the strength of the population of the individual States and groups of States that will be federating.

I am in entire harmony with the proposal that has been made by some of the members of the Indian States Delegation that the whole question of the apportionment of seats between the States *inter se* should be gone into carefully by a Parliamentary Committee on which the States should have no representation, and whose decision should be final and binding on those who choose to federate. All I should like to say here is that all the States, the biggest and the smallest, should have the fullest opportunity of advocating their cause before that Committee, and should be, as I have said, bound by its decision if they choose to federate. I am quite prepared in the first instance to entrust this matter to the Chamber of Princes as a first step towards settlement, but I do think, realising the complexities of the problem, that it will be difficult to arrive at a solution in it. But I should like to make it abundantly clear that, in the event of the agreement that is arrived at not commanding the unanimous acceptance of all members, the permanent and the temporary, the big and the small, the agreement should be regarded as a failure and recourse should be had to the Committee.

Coming now, Sir, to the Federal Executive, I have to say that I entirely support the view of His Highness of Bhopal that the States, while not desiring to have any specific provision for any specific number of seats in the Federal Cabinet, will wish that their interests should be secured by a constitutional convention. All I

would wish to say is that there should not be any conventional or constitutional barrier to the representative of smaller States having a place in the Cabinet if he is found to have all the necessary qualifications.

Then as regards the question of the Federal Court, I have to say that it should not be presumed that merely because a State happens to be classed and designated as a second class or smaller State it should not be possible for that State to have an individual Federal Court of its own. Several of the so-called smaller States will be in a position to have individual Federal Courts of their own, and where this may not be possible they may very conveniently be able to group themselves into Provincial units and utilise the services of a Court appointed by that unit, and wherever these Courts meet the requirements of efficiency and impartiality no outside agency should be employed to dispose of the federal section of their judicial work. After all, we remember that the decisions of the federal section of the States' Courts will be appealable to the Central Federal Court, and there will be, therefore, no chance of any abuse of these privileges.

Then, coming to the question of federal finance, I have to say that here, too, I am in general agreement with the view put forward by the Indian States. I have only two observations to make; they are, firstly, that the super-tax should not be made a source of federal revenue as recommended by the Finance sub-Committee. Several of the smaller States regard the super-tax on incomes of their subjects as a source of good revenue and its federalisation will mean a substantial loss to them and will consequently add to their difficulties in federating.

The other thing is in regard to the tributes. I am glad to see that the Finance sub-Committee have recognised the undesirability of retaining the tributes as a permanent feature of federal finance, in view of those contributions being of a feudal character, and have recommended that they should be abolished at as early a date as possible. I only hope that, in pursuance of the considerations that have led the Committee to make the suggestion, it will be felt to be only right that such tributes as are revisable shall not be revised but will be left at their present figure until they are abolished.

Then, coming to the question of federal defence, external relations, foreign relations, commercial discrimination, and so on, I am of the same opinion as His Highness the Chancellor; I have no additional remarks to make upon those subjects; and I entirely associate myself with the views which he has expressed.

Before I close the subject of Federation, Sir, I should like to make a few observations on what has been urged to be the condition necesary to bring about Federation. It has been suggested that if the States covering a population of 51 per cent. of the aggregate States' population join the Federation, the scheme should be given effect to; but I venture to think that this condition alone will not meet the requirements of the situation sufficiently. Unless there is a definite minimum proportion of the aggregate number of States

joining the Federation, and the federating States also cover 51 per cent. of the total population of the States, there will be a possibility of only a few big States with large populations joining the Federation, and giving effect to that scheme on the satisfaction of their claims, without satisfying the claims of other States which may be equally desirous of federating. I beg to submit that both these conditions should be combined, and on the satisfaction of both of them the scheme should be given effect to.

In conclusion, Sir, I should like to make an earnest appeal to the British Government, the British Delegates, Their Highnesses, whose kind disposition towards the smaller States in the past I particularly wish to acknowledge, and to our British-Indian friends, for their sympathetic consideration and generous support of the cause of the smaller States. I have no doubt that our problems will be reviewed by them in a spirit of sympathy and justice and that they will feel that they merit their support. I also wish before I close my remarks to thank you, Mr. Prime Minister, for very kindly affording me this opportunity of placing my views before the Conference.

Sir A. P. Patro: Mr. Prime Minister, since I made my observations at the last meeting of the Minorities Committee there has been much discussion on immediate constitutional advancement in the country. I do not propose to make any lengthy remarks, but we have now reached a stage in the discussions in this Conference when we should get to grips with the problems as practical business men. I do not propose to review the whole work of the Conference recorded in the Reports just now placed before us. This is not the occasion for that. Much good work was done, but the general result in my view is far from satisfactory. I rejoice that the Congress decided to join this Conference and no one could have contributed more than the Mahatma Gandhi, but we all failed; the failure to solve the minorities problem is a painful chapter in the political history of our country. We have had the expression of views on many important subjects in this Committee but agreement on many of them is difficult to discover. The Federation of all India is fraught with great difficulties and among them is one I would refer to by way of illustration. That is the claim of the States for thirty per cent. of the representation in the Lower Chamber reserved for the Princes and the claim of the Muslims for 33⅓ per cent. It can easily be imagined what would be the position of the other majorities and minorities. Again, the States desire to have a full voice in the management of a Federal Executive in the matter of motions of no-confidence. If they decide to add their weight on the side of the Executive the responsibility of the Legislature would become nominal. There are other vital points, very important and fundamental, which must be worked out by agreement and negotiated and they must take time.

The Federation of India must be expedited without unnecessary delay, but the point, to my mind, is this: How long do we expect it will take to complete this structure? The architect may be there and the design may be there, but what are the materials available for building up a solid and sure structure which will be a permanent

one, as permanent as the Taj Mahal, to which His Lordship referred at the beginning of his remarks.

Let us realise that as a fundamental principle in the structure of Federation for India. If we fail to notice it or if we minimise the important of it we shall not be doing justice to ourselves and to the vast population of the country. There is no going back upon the work achieved last year, and the promises made of federal responsibility with safeguards ought to be fulfilled as early as possible.

Nor can we stand still during this period. The demand of the Indian people is quite clear. What, then, should be the policy of His Majesty's Government? I would say emphatically and unhesitatingly: Go forward. Do not stand still. Do not arouse the spirit of India. Do not create ill-feeling in India against the British.

In what form and to what extent in the circumstances is this a practical problem? It is unquestionable that the advance must not be too slow, or it will keep India in a state of unrest. Peace and contentment will not prevail if matters are delayed. The political consciousness of the people has been aroused, and a rapid advance at present is necessary. I do not believe, however, that too sudden changes will benefit the people, and they may strain the very machinery by which we want to attain Swaraj. You must advance with a firm determination to reach the goal of full responsible self-government.

I have said that the ideal of Federation cannot be realised without a long process of adjustment and negotiation whilst steps are being taken to work out a federal scheme. Are we certain of the period within which the federal structure can be completed? Can we in India wait with patience during the suspensory period, without having any kind of responsibility to work with? That is the practical question which we have to face.

If the period of construction is short and brief, if it is certain that we can have this structure within a brief period, then there is no necessity for an intermediate stage; but if, on the other hand, we find that there are circumstances which will necessitate delay in the constructional work, or that a period must intervene between now and the completion of the structure, what is to be done? That is the problem that we have now to consider. If we are assured that there is a certainty that within a fixed and definite period the structure will be complete, no difficulty arises; but if, on the other hand, that is not so, then we must have responsibility in British India. A scheme of responsibility must be introduced in the Central Government of India.

My experience is that dyarchy is a sound plan in the evolution of responsible government. The dyarchic system may have scared away those who refused to work it, but it is very striking that every one in this Conference agreed to have a similar system in the Federal Government, with reserved subjects and with safeguards during the transitional period.

Is it not dyarchy? Strong language will not build up solid structures. Experience and practical knowledge are most essential for constructive work. There should be responsibility in the Central Government immediately, along with the fully responsible Provinces, otherwise Indian opinion is bound to consider that you are giving shadow without substance. It is no doubt good logic to say that when there is a certainty of payment of a sum, let that sum be received in reasonable instalments instead of waiting a longer time for the full payment; but the receiver would wish to have the whole amount at once so as to be able to make the best use of it. There is a section of public opinion in India which would leave the payment till the time when an all-India Federation becomes a reality; but that would be a calamity.

If Parliament will face and accept this solution without any demur it will be very good. If they refuse to face the problem, the practical needs of the country, then they must be prepared to face a serious situation in the country. India should not be drawn into party politics, nor should it become the field of party manœuvres. The responsibility of establishing peace and contentment lies upon His Majesty's Government. The British Government is a party to this Conference. It is equally their responsibility to assist in the solution of the minorities problem. There is ample material available for making a decision. When this problem is well decided, there is no difficulty further in the way of introducing responsibility in the Centre as well as in the Provinces. For the purpose of Provincial autonomy a solution of the minorities problem is essential, and its application to the Centre is only consequential. There would be no other insurmountable obstacle in the way of adopting responsibility in the government of British India. This will be preliminary to and a preparation for the higher and fuller responsibility which Federation would involve. This is an interim stage during which a sense of responsibility will be evolved. This is not a new scheme or a new suggestion. Ample evidence was placed before the Royal Commission. Evidence from all Provinces was placed before it in large volume, and the Royal Commission considered this question, and therefore it is not new either to Parliament or to the British Government; it is a problem which has been thrashed out very fully in India during the two years of the visit of the Statutory Commission. This problem, therefore, does not take any section of the British public by surprise, nor should this Conference consider that it is a new thing that has been sprung upon it. It is a problem which was indicated last year, and which is full of possibilities in the material available before the Royal Commission.

It may be that the introduction of responsibility in the Centre was not in view during the discussions of the Round Table Conference, but that is no argument to use, for the whole comprises the part and the greater includes the less. This is a necessary corollary to the greater federal reforms discussed last year. It requires only the amendment of a few sections of the present Government of India Act to bring this into operation immediately. It does not

require wholesale modifications of the principles of the Government of India Act, nor of the principles upon which the Government of India Act is based. I suggest it could be done by modification or amendment of sections in the Government of India Act. If those were investigated, it would be possible to find that this scheme of responsibility in British India, to begin with, pending the preparation and completion of the federal structure, becomes a practical problem. If you do not give this sense of responsibility and allow it to develop in the Indian population at present during the interim period, then you will meet with great obstacles even when the Federation is introduced. My party presses for both responsibility in the Centre and in the Provinces.

I would in this connection refer you to the wise words uttered by the Prime Minister in the debate in the House of Commons on the 26th January, 1931:—

> "The first formidable question was the question of responsibility at the Centre. Speaking for myself, before the Conference met, after a study of what had been said in India, I had come to the conclusion that even if British India alone came into the consideration or the question had to be considered by us for British India alone, we should have had by hook or by crook to devise some means of giving some responsibility to the Central Government—nothing would have been accepted without that. The question was, was it possible to give it? If it was possible it ought to be given. If it were not possible then no agreement was possible."

I submit that it is possible to give responsibility in the Central Government of British India at present pending preparation of the effective scheme of Federation. I refuse to accept that even after one hundred and fifty years of close connection between Great Britain and India, the statesmen of Britain are not able to appreciate the great and rapid changes that are taking place in the East and in India, and to establish friendly partnership between the two countries. Undeterred by violent criticisms in India and in England, let His Majesty's Government and Parliament work in a businesslike manner and provide a constitution immediately which will be worked by the people, which is not designed to the dictates of capitalists or the intelligensia only, but which would work for the benefit of the people, and which would strengthen those who have been constitutionalists and co-operated with the Government without fear, without favour, in the interests of the people and in justice to the people.

Sir Abdul Qaiyum: I am much obliged to you, Sir, for giving me this early opportunity of speaking at this Conference. I shall not worry you with a long speech regarding the constitutional issues of India, but will confine myself to the affairs of my own Province.

A year has passed since we last met in this old and historic Hall to discuss the affairs of India and as we meet again to-day for the same purpose, I must not lose this opportunity, which will probably be the last one, of repeating the woeful story of my Province. Much

has happened in that unfortunate Province during the past twelve months, and you cannot be unaware of the turn that events have taken there. Your new Secretary of State for India, whom we now find in a more responsible position, must have kept you informed of what has been happening in those regions. I will not attempt to go into details and will simply remind you that the people are now more determined to achieve their legitimate rights of equal partnership with the rest of India in the constitutional advance of the country. I thought that I might be able to persuade my people to start with what we had got last year, though, as stated by me then and there, it was not likely to satisfy them, but I must confess that I have failed in my endeavours to satisfy even the most moderate of the educated classes. I am here, therefore, to tell you once more, that nothing short of an equal status with other Governors' Provinces will satisfy the people of the five settled districts if you wish to satisfy them.

The question has now assumed serious dimensions and unless the people are given the benefit of full-fledged reforms immediately the province will remain in its present state of upheaval. They have been demanding these reforms for the past eleven years and looked eagerly forward to the satisfaction of their legitimate rights by the Round Table Conference which met here last year. Unfortunately the Report of the sub-Committee which was appointed to deal with the question has not satisfied them and the result is that the whole Province is now in a ferment and every class, interest and community is roused against this policy of delay and inactivity. My position as a member of the Round Table Conference on my return this time will be a peculiarly difficult one. Unless the people are convinced that the reforms are to be real and genuine and that their natural aspirations can thereby be met in a reasonable manner and that they should organise an influential and powerful class to rally round the new reform scheme and be prepared to defend it against the attacks of the extremists, we shall not be able to guide the Province along a healthy channel. While the most loyal and earnest supporters of the reforms have failed to convince the people that any real and effective reforms are going to be shortly introduced into the Province, the outside influences of the extremists in India have succeeded in making them believe that it is only the Congress which recognises their rights of equal partnership with the rest of India. The red-shirt movement has therefore widely spread with its consequential policy of repression and is proving disastrous to the best interests of the Province, for it has removed all possibility of the growth of an intelligent and influential constitutional party, which might have rallied all the best elements of the frontier people and organised them for the effective working of the reforms. This is precisely what has happened. The position is so serious that prompt and effective measures are essential, if the Province is to be saved from the evils of revolution and a possible repetition of the Hijrat movement of 1920.

The question therefore is whether the frontier people will ever tolerate differential treatment from the rest of India in the matter

of reforms. To this I can only answer that in their present mood they cannot be expected to accept what they call a stigma of inferiority. They base their claim of constitutional equality on the assurances given by the late Lord Curzon as Viceroy to the then Secretary of State for India when the Province was separated from the Punjab, to the effect that the people of the settled districts would not in any way suffer as the result of separation; on the Bray Committee Report of 1923, which found them fit for practically the present-day dyarchical reforms, and now more fully on the result of the recent sifting enquiry made by the Haig Committee under the direction of this Conference. This last Committee finds us fully capable of working any constitutional reforms, including the charge of law and order like the rest of India.

In spite of all this, I cannot personally ignore the fact that we have had no great experience of working a reformed Council or a reformed administration, though the fault does not lie with us; but it cannot be also denied that the people, besides possessing potential and natural capacity for self-determination, now contain some of the finest elements out of which an intelligent electorate as well as a responsible Legislature and Ministry could be constituted. The number of highly educated Pathans on the frontier has increased considerably of late years, and stands at a higher percentage than in the Western Punjab. There is a very powerful middle class of professional men and landholders, and it is this class which will be the mainstay of the new Government. There is no reason why the energy, the ability and the wealth of intellect of the upper and middle classes, as well as the patriotic fervour and virile character of the masses, should not be harnessed to the salutary and beneficial task of nation-building in the Province, of course within the limits of its position in the constitution of India.

Sir, while the unanimous decision of the people of the frontier is for complete equality with other Provinces, I am prepared to admit that the lack of facilities for gaining experience in public life and administration, which Lord Curzon's partition scheme brought about, may possibly justify some slight temporary modifications in certain directions, not in the Government of India Act itself but only in the Instrument of Instructions under the Act. But I must make it clear that all differential features of the Provincial constitution for the North-West Frontier Province must disappear automatically after a short time, say at the end of five years or so; and it is in this light that I am going to make a few observations on the provisions of the Report of the sub-Committee appointed by you last year. If my suggestions are accepted, I have every hope that the better minds of the Province will unite to work the new constitution and will make it a success. They will, I am sure, be strong enough to control the extremists and even the present-day form of " red-shirtism " in the Province may subside. The constitution as at present recommended by the sub-Committee has failed to satisfy the people. When the Haig Committee was formed and began to work at Peshawar last summer the extremists of the " Red-shirters " and " Congressites " agreed to serve on it, and

sent Mian Ahmad Shah, Barrister-at-Law and Secretary of the Afghan Jirgha and Youth League, to represent them and the Congress; but when after a couple of days' work he found that the terms of reference of the Committee were very limited and would not allow of the discussion of the provisions of the proposed constitution for the Province, he resigned and gave his reasons for doing so.

To be brief, my suggestions about modifications in the proposed constitution are as follows—the references made being to the clauses of the Report of sub-Committee of the Round Table Conference:

(1) *The need for reform* (paragraph 4).

The recent events have fully established the need for the immediate introduction of reforms in the five settled districts and of a more definite policy of benevolent neutrality in the tribal areas for the safety and tranquillity of the Province as a whole. The administration of these two wings of the Province should be completely separated except in the joint charge of the two under the same head. While the one should be allowed the benefit of full-fledged reforms like the rest of India, the policy in the other wings should be one of non-interference in the internal affairs of the various tribes like some of the Indian States, and of help an advice to the tribesmen to develop and strengthen their existing organisations of self-government on more or less modern lines so as to be more peaceful neighbours of their brethren in the settled districts.

(2) *Classification of subjects* (paragraph 5).

I am in general agreement with the principles of the classification embodied in the Haig Committee Report, but I should like to point out that it will strengthen the efficiency and stability of the local administration if the Frontier Constabulary were to be placed under the supervision of the Inspector-General of Police with the Provincial Governor as the head of the administration; but if that is not possible, or is not considered desirable, then the location and operations of the force must strictly be confined to the border line and across it in the tribal area. Moreover, I must make it clear once more that no constitution will be acceptable to the frontier people unless law and order is entrusted to a responsible Minister.

(3) *The Executive* (paragraph 6).

I am emphatically of opinion that the words—

> " Governor of the North-West Frontier Province should be the effective head of the Provincial administration "

should be deleted; and in the place of the words

> " assisted by the advice of two Ministers drawn from the non-official members of the Legislature, at least one of whom should be elected "

the following should be inserted:—

> " The Governor shall act on the advice of two Ministers drawn from the non-official elected members of the Legislature like any other Provincial Governor."

The present proviso stifles Provincial autonomy, emasculates the Provincial Legislature, renders the Ministry impotent and irresponsible and deprives the people of any responsible share in the administration of their affairs—nay, it renders the system worse than dyarchy. The Governor may preside over the Cabinet to advise and guide his Ministers in the light of his higher responsibilities, but he should have no portfolio in his charge and should only vote when his casting vote is needed.

(4) *The Legislature* (paragraph 7).

As regards the size of the Legislature proposed by the sub-Committee, I think that the proportion of nominated members is excessive. In my opinion there is no need for any nominated non-officials in the Council. I recognise the need for expert advice and experience, as I know that a number of questions of importance may be coming up for discussion which may require technical knowledge. For this purpose officials, not exceeding four in number, may be nominated for the present. They will be required generally to help the Ministers either in piloting Bills or in explaining intricate and complicated questions of administration, policy or law. With regard to the other ten seats out of the fourteen suggested for nomination, I am strongly of opinion that these should be added to the list of general constituencies, reserving a few of them, if necessary, for the representation of special interests, such as big landlord, Army, commerce, etc.

The franchise should be on exactly the same lines as in other Provinces.

(5) *The Financial Settlement* (paragraph 8).

As regards the subvention, I need not say more than this, that if the Frontier Province is essentially connected with the defence of India, the subvention is an indispensable part of the scheme for that purpose and will serve as a guarantee for the goodwill of the frontier people.

In conclusion, I will earnestly once more appeal to you, Sir, and through you to the British Government, that we have always played, and will continue to play, an important part in the defence of India. We have invariably come to the assistance of Government in every emergency whether during the threefold Afghan wars, or nearly the three score of frontier expeditions against our own kith and kin, and have proved our loyalty to the cause of India and the British Empire, and I beg you to trust us in future too. The financial help that the Government have given us in the past, and the subvention, which shall be liable to periodical supervision by the Centre, should alone suffice for our mutual goodwill, and if our Pathan brethren in other parts of India have proved themselves good Indians, there is no reason why we should not prove loyal to the country of our birth and to the salt of our Motherland.

What difference is the introduction of reforms likely to make on our attitude towards the defence of India, when all important subjects connected therewith are to be reserved for the Centre, except to make us more loyal and faithful to the cause of India?

Is it feared that we shall try to drive away the British garrisons from the country, or interfere with the movements of troops in those parts, or prevent the opening of new roads and communications in our country, when the very existence of those garrisons, etc., is the means of our earning our livelihood from day to day? The reforms ought to improve the situation rather than hamper the smooth working of the administration of the Province. On the other hand, the disadvantages of the discontent in the settled districts were noticed when the Afridi trouble arose around Peshawar last year. As noted by the Bray Committee Report, and the despatches of the Local Government and of the Government of India—a discontented frontier will always be a source of anxiety and expense in the event of military operations in those parts.

I am glad to note that none of my colleagues from India has ever seriously objected to the introduction of reforms in the Province. As a matter of fact every responsible member of the Conference has fully expressed his sympathy with our claims. Moreover, the Congress has all along supported our cause not only in the Nehru Report, but also in all its subsequent resolutions. The great Mahatmaji who is the sole representative of that powerful body here has more than once promised his mighty support to our people in securing the equality of their rights with the rest of India. And this because our claim is based on justice and equity and because we depend entirely on the merits of our case as a non-communal question. Sir, I grieve to see that our people should have to struggle so hard for achieving a status which is enjoyed even by the so-called "Untouchables" in other parts of India, without their having ever asked for it in the past. Before I conclude I should like to emphasise that, if the Province has any importance, it must have also the advantage of a special and a better representation at the Centre than what is proposed for it by the Federal Structure Committee. With these words I close my appeal, which may possibly be the last one, to you, to the Government, and to the Conference, on the subject.

Raja of Sarila: Speaking to-day on behalf of myself and the smaller States I wish to convey through you, Prime Minister, to Their Majesties our appreciation of the sympathy and kindness which they have been graciously pleased to show towards us during our visit to this country. And I desire also to record our gratitude to the Government for the courtesy, hospitality and attention which they have extended to us. We are very conscious of the burden which a Conference such as this entails and more so at a time of such grave anxiety as this country and ours, nay the world, is experiencing. Our prayers and efforts to assist in sharing this responsibility have been continuously offered and they will continue to be offered on behalf of a happy issue out of all these afflictions. To me, coming to this Conference has been an undiluted privilege which I wish to acknowledge, and I am grateful that it was found possible to accord representation to important views of the smaller States.

The Report of the Federal Structure Committee having been made available to us, I have given it my careful attention, and I desire to place on record my personal appreciation of the work done by that Committee under the wise guidance of the Lord Chancellor. I shall confine myself only to those proposals which touch the question of the smaller States with which I, and those represented by me, are concerned, leaving it to others to traverse the rest of the ground covered by the Report.

It gives us satisfaction to note the opinion of the Committee expressed at page 11 in the last sentence of paragraph 24 of the Report, which runs:—

> "It is hardly less important to satisfy so far as may prove possible, the claims of the small States than to provide adequate representation for those which cover large areas."

It has been wisely recommended, I think, that in the matter of representation in the Federal Legislature allotment of seats as between the States themselves should be treated as a matter of domestic concern to be settled by them hereafter, but I feel it would serve a useful purpose if I were to state my views thereon at this stage by giving you a brief historical sketch of the position of the smaller States. I think I may say without undue reserve that the size of the Federal legislature as recommended in the Federal Structure Committee Report, in paragraph 14, meets with our approval, subject to such adjustments as may be necessary with regard to particular interests.

It will not be out of place, I think, to remind this Conference that we are not the mushroom growth of a day, we were in existence in pre-British days when our rights and privileges went unchallenged and undisputed. Because of our latent capacities to withstand every kind of change that has disturbed the body politic, to retain that which has contributed to the conservation of those elements of traditional good in the life of India, and above all to prove ourselves progressively adaptable to the conditions of a rapidly changing order, from time to time, when these have proved their appeal, our position and the part we can play in India have never been assailed from without; indeed our individual identity and contribution have been confirmed by treaties, engagements and sanads. We have always, since British days, shown in no less degree than our brothers the Rulers of the larger States that we are loyal to the conception of a progressive purpose for our country India, bound in indissoluble allegiance to the Crown. These things being so, I feel sure you all will contemplate that the smaller States have been more of an undiluted blessing than a hindrance. We have come here to-day to this Conference because we are alive to the development of the political consciousness of India and do not in any way desire to prove an obstacle in the solution of those delicate problems which have arisen as a result, but we must admit, that we, like every one else, are zealous to secure the continuance of proper and adequate conditions of existence for ourselves.

I know how difficult it is for you and for me to differentiate between the States large and small, tempted as each one of us is to judge the value and importance of anything by the ordinary standard of size, wealth and conventional standing. So long as our judgment is circumscribed in this way and by these considerations alone, I fear that in framing any constitution, in solving any problems, a settlement satisfactory to the interests concerned can never be evolved. I quite realise how important these ordinary conventional standards are, how worthy they are of respect, if they are logically applied, as they are the outward and visible signs for all men to read. But we are attempting to use our imagination in arriving at some more satisfactory solution of these problems and it is wise, I think, in considering the States question, having made due allowance for the nature of their representation, to ponder before passing, on the anomalies that have crept into the existing classification and constitutional position of those States classified as class 2 or so-called small States.

You are no doubt aware that this classification has been based on arbitrary conventions and for this reason, when imagination cannot come to the rescue sheer logic must prevail. Need I remind you, Sir, that some States in our present classification 1, are actually smaller than those in our present classification 2? I may also remind you that some States classified now in the second category are like those in the first, sovereign in their own territories and have powers of legislation and taxation. I go further to emphasise the anomaly of this artificial and arbitrary classification, by referring you to the existing Provincial list of precedence which shows that certain so-called smaller States, in class 2, are actually held in greater esteem by the Crown than some of those in class 1. The history of the relations of the States with the Crown from 1858 reveals no such distinction, even though salutes, the prerogative of the Crown, were fixed at that time. None of these anomalies and distinctions, I emphasize, existed until a very recent date when the Indian States Committee, presided over by Sir Harcourt Butler, discriminated in the way I have outlined. And what has been urged in justification of this differentiation? I shall refer you, Sir, to an observation of Lord Chelmsford's made on behalf of Mr. Montagu and himself at the Princes Conference in 1919. He said, "It would be unwise to base upon the salute list, as it stood, any fundamental distinction between the more important States and the remainder, but that owing to the extreme difficulty of defining with precision the full powers of internal administration and the embarrassment which must be caused by applying the test when formulated in individual cases, after all, the wisest course would be to base the distinction primarily on the salute basis."

If under any scheme equity of representation can be assured to the smaller States there can be little doubt that they would be advised to co-operate. In such event, I would support collective co-operation, so far as may be possible, rather than consecutive action by individual States.

It is satisfactory, no doubt, that the distribution of seats *inter se* has been left to the States themselves. I, however, do not wish any misunderstanding to exist as to the possible means of securing equity of representation. For the reasons alluded to, the allotment of seats on the basis of the membership of the Chamber of Princes is likely to prove a real hardship.

There is not the slightest doubt that the interests of the order of Princes and of States, big as well as small, are homogeneous, and that there is a common denominator of sovereignty. The desire and necessity to safeguard that sovereignty is also common, and what is desired is that stress be laid on this unity of interests and position rather than on the arbitrarily drawn distinctions which have grown up.

The smaller States, as has been said already, do also cherish the degree of sovereignty possessed by themselves and they are making a proportional sacrifice in the interest of the whole. For this reason there can be no question but that they would desire and expect an effective voice in the counsels of the Legislature. There is no reason why their interests should not be safeguarded. Therefore the criteria of representation operative in the Chamber of Princes must be abandoned and the classification on the basis of sovereignty and status be adopted irrespective of salute according to the list of precedence. We have full confidence that, under the able and wise guidance of our leader His Highness the Chancellor, the matter will be settled to the satisfaction of all. The consent of the smaller States to any scheme of Federation, or to the proposal in this connection submitted by the Federal Structure Committee, must be conditioned by the recognition of this principle of equity.

There remain, of course, 327 Estates or Jagirs which would perhaps go unrepresented unless their individuality and homogeneity were secured. Their individuality should not suffer any effacement by absorption or re-grouping with British-Indian Provinces. For they have in their own way an important contribution to make, which would be strangled if any process of dissection were agreed upon. Means can undoubtedly be discovered to secure for them collectively some measure of representation which will be beneficial to their development and individuality and thereby enable them to strengthen the whole. No constitution, I submit, can afford to destroy individuality which is hoary with tradition and with potential usefulness. The special characteristic of the small State is the personal and direct relation of the Ruler and his people, and no one acquainted with them will deny the esteem in which a Ruler is held by his people and the veneration that people have for his decisions and judgments. Due to this direct relation, business is prompt without endless formalities and dilatory proceedings. He is accessible to all and ready to redress grievances and to bestow the blessings of a personal rule.

In conclusion, Sir, I wish to state in unmistakable terms what has so often been said by others of my brother Princes, that we will give our fullest support and encouragement to every scheme or

method employed for the progressive realisation of the future good which is the ideal of all of us for India so far as these are consonant with the central idea of the supremacy of the Crown. Any programme not in harmony with this fixed idea, any programme which we believe would tend to bend or break the bonds of Commonwealth through allegiance to the Crown would be opposed by us to the uttermost, and I should be failing in my duty were I not to make this abundantly clear. With this sole qualification, let me add, our sympathy and strength are now and always at the disposal of our country, in her efforts to achieve a position of self-respecting equality in the Commonwealth, through joint efforts and labour expended in framing a constitution which will be worthy of the statesmanship of India and Great Britain, workable by ourselves, our heirs and successors.

Sir Cowasji Jehangir: Prime Minister, in my own country I am one of those who are labelled as Moderates, and I am as much proud or ashamed of being called a Moderate as Conservatives are of being called Conservatives in this country. But, Prime Minister, there are many Englishmen both in India and in England who hope and believe that Moderates, whether they be men or women, should only claim unsubstantial changes in the present form of Government, and should be prepared to accept with mild protest the decisions of the governments in India dictated from Whitehall. Believe me, Prime Minister, there is no such school of thought in India to-day; and if there had been one, you would surely have had a representative at this great Assembly who would have voiced such opinions. Moderates have always been agitators—constitutional agitators; and I trust and hope they will continue to be constitutional agitators if not more stubborn and more persistent in the future. But there are other schools of thought also in India. There is a school of thought that demands immediate Dominion status without reservations. There is another school of thought that demands independence. I for one, speaking for myself, will fight as long as I live against independence or a severance of the connection between India and England. I stand for its continuance now and for ever.

You will ask me what is the claim of the Moderates. It has been explained at this Table and in the Federal Structure Committee so often by its best exponents, Mr. Sastri, Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, Mr. Jayakar and others, that I need not here waste your time. We are for a complete transfer of power in the Provinces, with no reservations to the Governor except and only when the machinery of government breaks down, and at no stage in order to prevent the machinery of government breaking down. We stand for a simultaneous transfer of all power at the Centre with the exception of defence and external affairs.

Now, Sir, I would like to come to what have been called safeguards in finance. Let me clearly state, Mr. Prime Minister, that I do not think that the Report under consideration takes us much further than last year's Report. I am fully alive to the warning sounded by the Lord Chancellor in the Federal Structure Committee

of the dangers—which were not present last year—of going into any great detail, but that does not prevent us from considering such points as have no bearing on the financial situation of the world to-day. I am prepared to admit that during the long connection between our two countries, Great Britain may have undertaken certain financial responsibilities. Whether they are legal or merely moral, I am not here to express an opinion—I am not a lawyer—but I will repeat that I am prepared to admit that even if there are moral responsibilities Great Britain has a right to see that she is placed in a position whereby now and in the future she is able to discharge those responsibilities to her own people.

Those responsibilities are specially connected with the loans India has borrowed in this country—sterling loans. When we talk of sterling loans let us not forget that there are large numbers of Indians in India who have subscribed millions to those sterling loans. It is not only foreigners who have lent us money in sterling. Nevertheless, whether they be held by Indians or by Europeans if there is a moral responsibility or a legal responsibility attached to those loans I repeat that the British Government have a right to see that they are in a position to discharge the responsibility. Mr. Prime Minister, I would be prepared, by the constitution, to give the British Government a watching brief to guard her responsibilities, but I would not be prepared, by the constitution, to place the British Government in the position of a mortgagee in possession.

You can have your checks and counterchecks in the constitution, but let them be in India. It should not be beyond the wit of man to frame the Act in such a way that your responsibilities with regard to loans are safeguarded without the control from any authority in this country. We are not against the association of Englishmen in the government of India in the future in India, but we do object, and strongly object, to being controlled from seven thousand miles away, when that control carries with it the grave suspicion that it is not always in the interests of India.

We desire to have the power in our own hands to guide our own future in fiscal and currency policies. We do not desire that the Government in India, whether it be made up of Englishmen or of Indians, should be forced to impose duties—I will only mention one instance, a duty on machinery—which will hamper our industrial growth. I do not desire that the Government of India should be ordered that an import duty should be imposed on cotton, so that we may be less able to compete with the foreign imported article.

The whole history of our currency policy shows that there has been a conflict between the Government of India and the authorities in England, and the Government of India has failed in the struggle on every occasion. That struggle was carried on not by Indians but by Englishmen in India on behalf of India, but they were helpless. The currency policy of our country was dictated by authorities seven thousand miles away against the better judgment of Englishmen in India. That has been the history of the currency policy in India.

We desire now and for the future that we should be masters in our own house with regard to fiscal and currency management. Have your checks and counterchecks by all means to safeguard the liabilities which you may have incurred, but stop at that.

Now, Sir, the best security you have for the liabilities you have incurred are the great assets that India has to offer you, and it is to the interest just as much of Indians as it is of yourselves to see that those assets are preserved. By all means retain a watching brief as long as those loans exist to see that these assets are preserved, and that neither you nor future generations in England may ever be called upon to pay a penny due to the liabilities you have incurred.

Sir, I quite agree that this is not the place nor the occasion to go into further details with regard to financial safeguards, but I find just one sentence in the Report which I think it is very necessary to point out, lest I am taken to task when I return home and accused of being associated with it without contradiction. It is this: "The Majority of the Committee adhere to the principles enunciated in their previous Report."

Mr. Prime Minister, you will remember that last year when this House was in Committee we had occasion to discuss this matter and to express some disagreement. I cannot, I am sorry to say, state to-day that anything has happened in the interval to change the opinion I then expressed.

Now, Sir, coming to the Report on discrimination, I am sorry to have to mention that I am one of those who are of opinion that the formula that was presented last year is distinctly better than your Report of this year. I do not say that simply because I happened to be associated in a humble way in working out that formula, but because that formula, if properly interpreted, would be more satisfactory to India than your Report to-day. But it is even worse than that. You have introduced into your Report of this year a point which, if my memory serves me aright, was never discussed or considered last year. You talk of administrative discrimination. I do not remember ever having considered, either at the Conference or in private conversation, this question of administrative discrimination. I, for one, do not understand what it means. I was of opinion and firmly believed that the foundation of the principle we discussed last year was reciprocity. Is there any reciprocity when we come to administration discrimination? Are you in this country bound down not to discriminate against us administratively? Where is your principle of reciprocity when you go and introduce a new principle called administrative discrimination? And what is administrative discrimination? It strikes me, Prime Minister, that we Indians are obsessed with the idea that the old state of affairs is going to continue in India. We do not visualise and cannot visualise an Indian Government. Englishmen are obsessed with the idea that when there is a change of government there will be retaliation. Both Englishmen and Indians, suffering under this illusion, are asking for safeguards.

We are afraid—not I personally, but Indians are afraid—that when you want such safeguards you desire that the present state of affairs shall continue for ever. It cannot be denied that Englishmen in India have had on many occasions favourable treatment because they were Englishmen, and had more ready access to the highest officials in the land than the highest placed Indians. I can give you instances of Indian firms having had to employ an Englishman simply to be able to interview high officials, when the head of that firm, the owner of that firm, the proprietor of that firm had not that power of access. It was this that helped Englishmen to build up to a certain extent—only to a certain extent—their trade and commerce. Indians are obsessed with the idea that this sort of thing is going to continue. You, on the other hand, are obsessed with the idea that Indian Ministers will not be accessible to you in the future; that your trade and your industry will be handicapped because there is an Indian Government.

Prime Minister, let us forget the past and believe in the honesty, the straightforwardness and the spirit of equality and justice of Indians. Your energy, your powers of organisation, your financial strength, will enable you to hold your own in India in the future as in the past without such safeguards. I am one of those who believe that when an Indian Government comes into existence the Englishman will have more favourable treatment than in the past because Indians will find that they require the assistance of Englishmen, they require their financial assistance, their organising ability, their energy, and for their own advantage they are surely not going to neglect such opportunities as will come to them of equal partnership with Englishmen in industry and commerce.

But what does this administrative discrimination mean? Does it mean that every Indian Minister is liable to be dragged through a Court of law if he gives a contract to an Indian firm in preference to a European firm, because the European firm may have tendered two per cent. less? Does it mean that every appointment made by a Minister is to be brought before a Court of law for discrimination because he appoints a Hindu or a Muhammadan? We have had enough of that, Prime Minister. Even without such safeguards, I, neither a Hindu nor a Muhammadan, have perhaps been accused in this way of discrimination because, when I had the honour of being a Member of Government, I happened to appoint either a Hindu or a Muhammadan. Surely the disappointed party is bound to create a fuss if you have said safeguards. Am I, as a Minister, to be dragged before a Court because I give a contract to one firm and not to another, as I believe it is in the interests of my country? Am I to be threatened with public exposure because, in the best of good faith, I appoint a European and not an Indian to a Government post? What do you mean by administrative discrimination? It is practised every day by you. "Buy British goods" will be interpreted as discrimination. Prime Minister, what would your House of Parliament say to you if you gave a big contract to a foreign firm because it quoted two per cent. less? I

should call you unpatriotic. I woul say you were neglecting to do your duty. But you would be accused of discrimination under this clause. You must eliminate that clause. You cannot work it. Do not let us mistrust each other and talk of administrative discrimination. I can understand some talk of legislative discrimination, where you can judge it and where a Federal Court can adjudicate; but I cannot understand administrative discrimination.

I beg of you, Mr. Prime Minister, to apply your mind and I beg of Lord Reading to apply his mind to this question of administrative discrimination. It is going to lead to great trouble, not only between Europeans and Indians. It is going to lead to great trouble between Indians and Indians, and this is not the time to add fuel to the fire in communal questions. We have had bitter experience, we who have had to run the machinery of government, of other instances of administrative discrimination, and you, Mr. Prime Minister, must have had experience also. I would beg of you to drop this question and trust to good feeling and the sense of justice.

Mr. Prime Minister, I do not desire to take more of your valuable time. I have only to mention one point which has loomed large in the last week. We have heard rumours—they may be quite incorrect—but your press, or a certain section of your press, have not failed to remind us that there may be something in that rumour, and that is that we may have to go back to India and tell our people that we have brought back just now merely Provincial autonomy, and a Provincial autonomy which cannot be proved to be Provincial autonomy. We have heard a good deal about it and I do not desire to repeat what was said in the Federal Structure Committee, but I would sound a note of warning. There are men like myself who are determined to the end of their days to fight for the British connection, who have spent many, many years of their lives in this country and who consider England as their second home. Do not place them in a position in which they will be unable to fight. Do not wipe them out of the picture, in the language of Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, whatever you do. If, Mr. Prime Minister, you make a mistake at this critical juneture you will wipe men like myself and a good many of my friends out of public life. We are not going to join the non-co-operation movement, but there will be no school of thought to which we can belong. We are against non-co-operation. We firmly believe it is not to the best interest of our country. Do not let the masses of the people believe that non-co-operation is the only method of gaining liberty in India. If you do so you will not have a friend left in India, and what is more important you will wipe out of existence those friends who have stood by the British connection all their lives and are determined to do so to the end of their lives.

It is in your hands to keep us with you or to drive us away. It is in the hands of your Parliament, and may Providence guide their footsteps aright during the next week. If it does, India will be the greatest asset in the Empire of the future; if it does not, the

Empire may go, along with India. It may be that India will go first to rack and ruin, but the Empire will follow. I sound this note of warning as one educated in this country, and determined to support the British connection.

Dr. Narendra Nath Law: Mr. Prime Minister, I am grateful to you for giving me this opportunity of addressing a few words to this Conference. A heavy sense of responsibility rests on each one of us, and I hope that before we leave this country we shall be in a position to carry unimpaired the trust that has been reposed in us. The Province of Bengal, to which I belong, is at the present moment passing through a critical period. In addition to the economic distress which is common to every part of India, the outbreak of political crimes and the strong policy adopted by the Government have produced an extremely tense atmosphere throughout the Province. I yield to none in my regard for public peace, tranquillity and constitutional progress, but it is necessary to make a proper diagnosis of the evil. The problem of anarchism in Bengal is not so much a problem of the police as a problem of statesmanship. Thousands of young men in the Province, well-educated and belonging to respectable families, are chafing in acute discontent owing to their inability to earn a decent living. Unless we set up a Government responsible to the people, with adequate financial resources, and able to push forward a vigorous policy of economic reconstruction, the problem of anarchical crime will not be attacked at the root.

The policy of repression and reprisals, ordinances and convictions without trial, involving not only the few that are guilty but the many that are not, will scarcely commend itself to the far-sighted statesmen who really desire to remove this evil from the country. To my mind, the right remedy in order to stamp out terrorism is to take with us as the final outcome of our labours a full measure of self-government. That would remove all grounds for discontent by laying the foundation of economic prosperity. It is with the deepest conviction that I make this statement, and I appeal to you to realise the situation and to apply the right remedy to what is undoubtedly a grave distemper in our body politic.

The absence of a communal settlement is a regrettable feature in our efforts to reach agreement on the problems before us. So far as Bengal is concerned, our case has been briefly but well presented by my esteemed colleague, Mr. Basu. I endorse every word of the arguments he has used against communal electorates. I do not think it at all reasonable to introduce a statutory communal majority in the Legislature for a majority community, which would mean in effect the shaping of every law and of all policy according to the terms that a particular community, as such responsible to a section of the people on the basis of religious fellowship, chooses to lay down.

Nor can I forget the large body of Nationalist Muslims in our Province who are not represented at this Conference and who have declared in favour of joint electorates. It should not be thought

that I am hostile to the protection of the Muslim minority. I subscribe to every item of the fundamental rights which seek to protect the culture, language, script, education, profession, and practice of religion, and religious endowments, but I cannot, consistently with the principles of responsible government, support the view that there shall be in the Legislature in Bengal a permanent majority of members of a particular community who would have to account for their actions to a definite section of the population merely because they profess the same religious faith.

The Hindus, who are in a minority in Bengal but do not want separate electorates, are all opposed to any separate electorate for any community, religious or racial, far more for a community which constitutes a majority of the population. Assuming it were possible for me to accept separate electorates out of expediency, still I cannot support the provisions for a communal settlement drawn up by five Delegates of the Conference, because, among other reasons, it fails to allow any representation to such economic interests as commerce, landholders, labour, etc.

In a separate memorandum I have already shown why separate representation should be allowed to the landholders, and I am glad that this proposal has been generally approved. No less important is the representation of commerce. The first few decades of national development should pre-eminently be economic and commercial, and it is essential that the interests and points of view of Indian commerce and enterprise should be specially provided for in the Legislatures. A member returned from a general constituency cannot, in the present state of opinion and economic development in our country, be depended upon to press the views and requirements of Indian commerce and industry on the notice of the Legislature. Bengal, which is industrially and commercially backward, needs this special representation as an indispensable provision. All the knowledge and experience of Bengal's commercial men must be brought to bear upon the future development of her commercial enterprise, which a National Government must make its special charge.

A reference to the provisions relating to the five minority communities discloses that in Bengal, apart from the statutory majority of 51 per cent. for Muslims, the Hindus, with a proportion of 43 per cent. of the population, are to be given 36·5 per cent. of the representation—that is to say, with a *negative* weightage, within which are to be provided the seats for commerce, landlords, labour, etc., all on a communal basis, while the Europeans, who constitute not even 0·1 per cent. of the population, will have 10 per cent. of the seats.

I would now turn to the financial aspect of Federation so far as it affects Bengal. On this question I feel very keenly—in fact, the whole Delegation from Bengal feels likewise—and my esteemed colleague, Sir Provash Chunder Mitter, who represented us on the Federal Structure Committee, but is not here at present, has already

submitted certain proposals, with our full authority and approval, for your consideration. We are of opinion that Dominion status would be of poor avail to us if we did not get resources enough to put our own house in order. Bengal, which produces substantial wealth, is, in fact, the poorest in point of nation-building services among all the provinces of India, with the exception of Bihar and Orissa.

We have already submitted a proposal for the transfer of the jute export duty to Bengal. The revenue from jute is wholly obtained from Bengal, and it has been a serious complaint of Bengal ever since the last financial settlement, that this duty should have benefited the Centre without any compensating advantages for Bengal and in fact at the cost of her progress along all constructive lines. Just as excise on liquor, narcotics, and drugs has been, under the scheme of the Federal Finance sub-Committee, transferred to the Provinces, while other excises have been retained for the Centre, the export duty on jute can easily be made Provincial, retaining, if necessary, the other export duties for the Centre, without any grave injury to financial principles and administration. I am aware, of course, that personal income-tax will, under the present scheme, be available for distribution to the Provinces by the Federal Authority, subject to certain contingencies. But this source of revenue cannot be relied upon to yield a substantial amount in the immediate future. It is for this reason that I am strongly in favour of finding for Bengal a more certain, immediate and substantial source of revenue in addition to the proposals which have already been made. I find that the only source of revenue which will satisfy all the requirements of the situation is the export duty on jute.

As regards commercial discrimination, I have already expressed my views in my memorandum, copies of which have been circulated. I have noted the Report of the Federal Structure Committee on this subject and I find that it is in some respects a distinct improvement upon the provisional clause formulated last year. I, however, want to make myself clear on one or two points. A reference to paragraph 18 of the Fourth Report of the Federal Structure Committee creates the impression that India will be under the obligation to extend to the nationals of those parts of the British Empire which discriminate against Indians the same rights and privileges which are extended to those parts of the Empire that do not. I cannot support this view. We should have complete freedom of action in respect of the policy to be followed in the future governing our relations with such countries. Paragraph 18 of the Fourth Report of the Federal Structure Committee should be amended accordingly. Then, again, in paragraph 21, the remark is made that where a larger business makes use of unfair competition, the general law should be sufficient to deal with it. I do not understand how, in the absence of any powers for special legislation, such unfair competition can be checked. Therefore it is necessary that there should be some provision by means of which the large business may be

prevented from employing, or from having the opportunity to employ, unfair methods that may kill a struggling Indian industry. At the same time, abuses of this provision should be guarded against.

Sir, a few words more and I have done. I have taken up your time with the problems of Bengal, because they loom large in my mind. I want to see a prosperous and contented Bengal, because I want to see a prosperous and contented India. There cannot be a happy India with an unhappy Bengal. We have come this great distance to win for India an honourable place in the comity of nations. On that there is, fortunately, no divergence of opinion. The British Government is bound by its pledges, and we have come here to see those pledges implemented into a great Charter of Indian Liberty, bringing an era of peace, goodwill, and progress to a land of three hundred and fifty millions of people.

H.H. The Nawab of Bhopal: Mr. Prime Minister, I have had the privilege of attending the Federal Structure Committee throughout its sittings, and have had full opportunity of expressing my views on various questions that have been discussed there. I therefore do not desire to take the time of this Conference by making any comments on the different Reports. This, with your permission, Mr. Prime Minister, will be done in a brief manner by our pro-Chancellor, His Highness the Maharao of Cutch. I will only say a few words and will confine my remarks to the general aspects of the problem. As the work of the Conference has proceeded from day to day I have become more and more convinced that the one solution of the complex problems of India is the creation of an all-India Federal Constitution. If the integrity of India is to be achieved, if she is to have peace, if she is to be, in the words of Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, an India which will be one single whole, each part of which may be autonomous and may enjoy absolute independence within its borders regulated by proper relations with the rest, then an all-India Federation to my mind is the only solution. All of us who are representing the Indian States at this Conference will, I assure you, Sir, be prepared whenever called upon wholeheartedly to co-operate to achieve this object and to complete the work in a manner which will bring satisfaction to the States, to British India, and to the country as a whole.

You know, Sir, as well as any of us that notwithstanding the unfortunate dissensions, mistakes and even failures nothing can dim the steady flame of India's legitimate desire to be an equal partner in the British Commonwealth of Nations. Nobody has denied that the realisation of this desire must be subject to such reservations as may be necessary in the interests of the Indian Empire. May I therefore request you to utilise this opportunity to bring peace and contentment to India? And you, Mr. Prime Minister, are the best judge to decide what will really lead to this. Proceeding on the basis that the Central Government should be a Federation of all India, embracing both the Indian States and British India, after mature deliberation the Indian States Delegation decided last year

to support the demand for responsibility at the Centre. We still adhere to that decision.

We are, Mr. Prime Minister, friends of the Empire. No arguments are needed in support of this statement. As a friend of the Empire I should like to say that in my judgment it would be highly inadvisable, and if I may say so, even unfair to all of us, if by any chance decisions were taken which might be in conflict with the purpose for which this Conference was convened, or be at variance with the principles on which we have been working throughout the year, both in India and in England. Therefore, Sir, in the best interests of the Empire as a whole and for the sake of knitting together more closely the ties of goodwill and affection between Great Britain and India, I beg you to formulate some scheme which will permit the continuance of the work, the foundations of which were so well and truly laid by your famous declaration of January, 1931.

After all, Sir, the method of conference and of argument and reason is in my view the only satisfactory method of dealing with questions such as we have been discussing round this table, and I feel that neither England nor India can afford to forego the opportunity presented to us by this Conference of arriving at a satisfactory settlement of our problems. Any other methods of dealing with these matters, or too wide a gap in the progress of our work may lead to further misunderstanding in India, a possibility which should be avoided if it is at all possible to do so.

One word more, Mr. Prime Minister. We have learned to love and respect our friend, the friend of India, Lord Sankey. No word of appreciation, no tribute, can ever be too high for the great work he has been doing as Chairman of the Federal Structure Committee. We want him as early as possible in our midst in India; we want him to continue to preside over our deliberations, to help us in solving our problems and completing our work. We hope, Mr. Prime Minister, that you will be pleased to accede to our wishes.

The Maharaja of Darbhanga: Mr. Prime Minister, I take this opportunity of welcoming you in our midst again in the presidential chair of the second Plenary Session of the Indian Round Table Conference. It must undoubtedly be a matter of just pride to you, Sir, and it is a matter of joy to me and to all assembled here, to find that you, a veteran politician and the admitted leader of the British nation, are here to preside over and guide aright the epoch-making deliberations of this epoch-making assembly for framing the future destinies of India. We have never doubted that you were actuated by sincerity of purpose in setting yourself to that task. It was with mingled feelings of joy and pride that I watched from day to day the events on the political horizon in England, your part in the general election, your energy, your determination, and, above all, your foresight and unprecedented victory. The nation has realised that you can be safely trusted to give a correct lead, and we have seen for ourselves how you have undertaken that glorious task.

I have said all this to assure you, Sir, that I depend on you, as so many here do, to solve the problems confronting Britain and India and to let India have a full share at the psychological moment in the history of our struggle to raise her to her full stature in the comity of the nations of the world as an integral part of the British Commonwealth of Nations.

The task is difficult, but not for you I am sure. That it is a complicated one will be admitted on all hands, but that cannot be helped in view of the different shades of opinion to be entertained and respected, the different classes and communities to be provided with adequate safeguards and guarantees in the evolution of the new constitution of India.

The idea that an adequate protection for safeguarding the interests of the various important classes or communities or interests as I prefer to call them, would lead to an undesirable fragmentation of the nationalistic ideal does not wholly commend itself to me, for if any one important component part or entity is not cared for the construction may be defective. The landlord class, to which I have the honour to belong, have the largest and most important interests at stake in British India, and they should be adequately preserved and safeguarded.

This is the class which is free from any communal bias or tinge so far as their common interests in principle are concerned. The landlords of all the Provinces in India claim their lineage from ancient houses, who have held lands for ages past. The grants of land to us have been made either in recognition of military services rendered to the State or for some other potent reason, and these grants have to be respected and their integrity has to be maintained in future in any new scheme for the Government of India. Our previous history is that of unalloyed loyalty to the Crown, and we have, whenever occasion presented itself, helped for the maintenance of law and order. We have always respected the pledges expected of us and we trust the pledges given to us will be equally respected by the British Government. Apart from this we have, none the less, done our little bit for progress and development of the Indian nation. During the war our class came forward and helped the Government with men and money to the fullest extent of our capacity. The landlords have always, by their active co-operation in more ways than one, helped to carry on the administration of the Provinces to which they belong, in particular and also in general. For all these considerations combined, I do want to impress on you, Mr. Prime Minister, and on my brother Delegates as well, that the landlord class forms a special class with peculiar problems of its own—apart from the common problems of public weal—and as such deserves special representation in any new scheme of government. This class should also have an electorate and a quota of seats in the Central as well as the Provincial Legislatures, commensurate with our interests. It will not do for us to seek entry into the Legislatures through the general constituencies alone evidently for more reasons than one and I am gratified to see that

the Lord Chancellor and his Committee have recommended the retention of our special representation. We desire it for the preservation of our rights and for the preservation of our class as a whole and cannot in any way be blamed for it. We do not, by putting forward our claims, want to enrich ourselves at the cost of others, or impede in any way the march of our country towards progress, leading to full nationhood, but we cannot allow the rights and privileges of our class to be ignored or encroached upon.

This brings me to the implications underlying the Permanent Settlement. Sanads granted to us under the Permanent Settlement should be regarded as solemn pledges and their binding nature and sanctity should not be minimised. Any attempt to disregard these or to nullify their value by the imposition of fresh taxes on agricultural incomes will be deemed nothing short of a breach of faith. These sanads ought to be regarded as charters of our fundamental rights and should be respected and safeguarded as such.

In regard to the question of Legislatures I should like to impress upon you the necessity of having Upper Houses in the Centre as also in the Provinces where the different interests should be adequately represented. A Second Chamber is necessary in that it does exercise a salutary check on the impetuosity of the Lower House in many matters and in many ways. It is all the more necessary for a balanced use of power, and, unless there is a check or a chastening factor, power stands in danger of being abused.

I shall not take up more of your time, Sir, and would finish by briefly adverting to one more point. The tendency of Indian Legislatures has of late been to dabble with problems of social reform adversely affecting the religious ideas and traditions of the Hindu community at large. Religious matters or social reform should not be allowed to come within the purview of Legislatures. These questions should not be allowed to come before the Legislatures but should be left alone to the leaders of the community or to the care of time and the advance of society in the line of reform by itself. Any such step is regarded as unauthorised and wounds the feelings of those who hold their religious traditions in sacred esteem. The policy of non-interference in all such matters ought, therefore, to be strictly adhered to and to constitute one of the fundamental privileges of the Hindu society. Thank you again, Mr. Chairman.

(The Conference adjourned at 1-10 p.m. and resumed at 2-30 p.m.)

Mr. Fazl-ul-Huq: Mr. Prime Minister, Sir, I will not pretend to make any attempt to discuss the whole field of activities of the Round Table Conference, but at the present moment I will confine my remarks to a very brief statement of the Muslim case in Bengal and Assam. In doing so I propose to avoid arguments as much as possible and to allow facts to speak for themselves. I thought that the Clerk of the Weather must either be an Indian or that he must be in profound sympathy with Indian aspirations. Except for one or two occasional breaks, you have enjoyed ever since the Indian

Delegates set foot in this country a spell of glorious weather, which reminds us of all the glories of an English summer. It seems, Sir, that the celestial powers are co-operating with you in trying to evolve a suitable constitution for India.

Sir, I do not, in what I am going to say, wish to raise any controversial issues. I will try to avoid heat as much as possible, and in my own way throw some light on the very difficult problems confronting you and the Government.

I have heard it said that the Muslim claim for a majority representation in the Punjab and Bengal would lead to a statutory majority for a particular community, a result which would be fundamentally opposed to all conceptions of responsible government. To those who advance that argument I would only say that the implications of any contention of that character would simply mean that India is not a good field for the introduction of representative institutions at all. If you will look at the distribution of the population of the various communities in the Provinces, you will find that, except for the Punjab and Bengal, the Muslims are in a hopeless minority in six out of the eight Provinces, the Muslim proportion in the population never going beyond twenty per cent. and in one or two cases coming so low down as four or five per cent. If responsible government is introduced into India, the various Legislatures would only be creatures of Statute, and you would find that in all the Provinces one particular community, whatever your system of electorate may be, will be in a dominant position over the rest. If adult franchise is introduced, I expect that the population ratio will be reflected on the electoral rolls. I would ask my friends to consider whether, in a Province in which the Muslims are, for instance, only three per cent. in the population, without any reservation of their interest of any kind, it would be possible for even a single Mussalman to find a seat in the elected Legislature.

If that be the position, and if it is argued that it is opposed to all systems of representative government to grant a statutory majority to any community in any Province, then the argument simply means that India is not fit for responsible government, because by introducing responsible government you are, whether you wish it or not, in six of the eight Provinces placing one particular community in a very dominant position for all time. Now, Sir, we the Muslims know very well that responsible government for India means that our Hindu friends will have seventeen shillings in the pound. We do not grudge them the seventeen shillings; all that we want is that in the three shillings that remain we and the other communities will be allowed to have our proper share.

Now, Sir, so far as the question of electorates is concerned I will not at this moment say much with regard to the merits or demerits of separate electorates. I wish to remind those of my friends who still wish to raise the question that so far as the Muslims are concerned we consider that this privilege of separate electorates is very safely entrenched behind promises and declarations of Prime

Ministers, of Secretaries of State, repeated time after time by Viceroys and Governors of Provinces, long before there was any promise of any kind for responsible government in India.

These separate electorates have got a history. They really enable the Muslims and others to get opportunities for co-operating with the other communities in advancing the common interests of the country as a whole. As a matter of fact these separate electorates are being acted upon in daily life. When you, Sir, want a particular group of Delegates in this Conference to express their views you leave it to them to select their own representatives. I consider that a kind of separate electorate. Suppose you want twenty speakers. You do not ask the Delegation as a whole to select those twenty speakers. You ask the Muslims to select one or two, the Depressed Classes to select their representatives, and so on, and I submit Sir, that that is the principle of separate electorates, being acted upon in the ordinary affairs of daily life. My friend, Dr. Narendra Nath Law, speaking this morning, was very much against separate electorates, but when he finished his speech he put in a particular plea for representatives of landlords and the mercantile classes. What are those electorates except separate electorates? You take a number of persons owning property, not the whole body of them, but only a certain proportion who pay a certain amount towards Government revenue. You class them apart from the rest of the people and you agree that they should be placed on a separate register and select their own representatives. Is not that a separate electorate?

Dr. Narendra Nath Law: But not on religious lines.

Mr. Fazl-ul-Huq: Then we come to the question of economic divisions. I fail to see how there can be a difference of view as regards the treatment of economic questions between any body of persons residing in a particular country. There may be differences on points of religion, but there cannot be any difference in points of view so far as economic points are concerned. I may remind my friend, Dr. Narendra Nath Law, that I am in entire agreement with him on the plea he put forward regarding better financial treatment for Bengal than has been received in the past. I say that there ought to be separate electorates, but on economic questions anything which involves financial assistance in order to get properly on the path of constitutional progress, Hindus, Muslims, Christians, all Indians inhabiting a Province, ought with one accord to speak with one mind.

Therefore, Sir, if there is no necessity for having separate electorates on the basis of religion, there is still less justification for having separate electorates mainly on considerations of finance, and other considerations of that kind.

My friend has said that so far as Bengal is concerned there is a body of Muslims whom he calls the Nationalist Muslims who are in favour of joint electorates. I have heard that expression "Nationalist Muslims" used, and I, for one, wish to testify that

to me that expression is absolutely meaningless. Every Muslim is a Nationalist; there cannot be a division of Muslims into Nationalists and non-Nationalists, any more than they can be divided into tall or short and fat or lean. I consider " Nationalist Muslims " is as much a meaningless term as would be " Protestant Catholics." I therefore refuse to believe that so far as Bengal is concerned there is any body of persons who can be called Nationalist Muslims in the sense that their views with regard to the system of electorates are essentially different from ours.

There are certain persons in Bengal, I know, who are in favour of joint electorates, but my friend conveniently forgets that that group of persons have stipulated that, if separate electorates are replaced by joint electorates, the Mussulmans of Bengal shall have representation to the full extent of their population ratio. If representation to the full extent of the population ratio is given to the Mussulmans of Bengal, then personally, so far as I am concerned—I do not speak on behalf of the Muslim Delegation at all—I would accept joint electorates for Bengal, but only provided the full quota is given to me on a population basis. I do not think my friend, Dr. Narendra Nath Law, will accept that position.

Consider for a moment the case of Bengal.. I do not at all ask that the Bengal Mussulmans should be given any protection of that kind, but what I do ask is that the Bengal Mussulmans, who constitute more than fifty per cent. of the population, should have sufficient opportunities given to them to take their proper share in the activities of the country.

What is at the present moment the condition of affairs in Bengal? There are twenty-eight districts, in thirteen of which the Muslims are in a majority; in three the two communities are in a position of equality, more or less, and in twelve districts the Hindus constitute an overwhelming majority.

Then there is another point with regard to the distribution of the population which must not be forgotten. Our Hindu brethren are most numerous in urban areas, and in those parts of the rural areas where they are in a minority they tend to congregate in certain portions of the districts. The result is that if there is no reservation of any kind for the Muslim community, and there is an open election on a common electoral roll, our Hindu friends will not only capture the seats in the twelve districts where they are in a majority, but also in the three where they are on an equality with the Muslims, with the result that the Muslims will not be able to secure the proportionate ratio to which they are entitled on the basis of population.

This, again, is on the assumption that the Hindus and Mussulmans are equally competnt to take part in elections with equal resources and powers of organisation. In actual practice, however, there are factors which tend to discount the Muslim position and which must not be forgotten. The Mussalmans of Bengal at present are mostly agriculturists, poor, illiterate, disorganised and unable to

appreciate the value of a vote or the necessity of combining together for the purpose of sending representatives to the Legislature to represent their views.

When all these factors are taken into consideration, it will be evident that although the Mussulmans may constitute, on an average, a majority in numbers, they will not be able in an open election on an equal electoral roll to secure the position to which they are entitled in view of their preponderance in the population. A formula which will not take account of exceptional circumstances but is based on an average majority of the population is as much an absurdity as a plan to construct a doorway whose dimensions are determined on the basis of the average height and bulk of mankind. You cannot do that; you must take into account the various factors which come into play, and having done that, and having faced the facts as they are, you will at once see that under present conditions the Mussulmans do not get, even in Bengal, that opportunity to which they think they are entitled. All that I plead for, Sir, is that we should be given opportunities to take our proper share in the administration of the affairs of our country and to be partners with the other sections of the community in the civic and administrative life of the Province.

If Swaraj really intends this message for all, I submit that the progressive realisation of responsible government in India demands that the participation of Indians of all classes in the work of administration should be so arranged that all the communities may have equal opportunities to show how much they are prepared to contribute to the common good. If the situation needs adjustment in certain matters, that adjustment should be made. You need not depend merely on theories in order to decide whether a particular course should be taken or not. My friend, Dr. Moonje, in the note that he has circulated, has referred to the opinion of Sir Austen Chamberlain condemning the system of separate electorates as being opposed to the principle of responsible government. I wonder if Sir Austen Chamberlain has come across two such incongruous specimens of humanity as Dr. Moonje and myself—professing different religions, worshipping different Gods.

A Member: The same God.

Mr. Fazl-ul-Huq: No, it cannot be the same God. My God is for separate electorates; his God is for joint electorates. So far as my God is concerned, he is for separate electorates. Dr. Moonje's God is all for joint electorates. Differing in manners, in customs, perhaps in food, what is more, we have been placed by our religions into such watertight compartments that Dr. Moonje's and my children will never inter-marry with one another. Has Sir Austen Chamberlain taken note of these conditions? I submit, Sir, that you should deal with India not as it should be but as it is, remembering always that if there is any possibility of removing some of the obstacles to future development every attempt should be made to have those obstacles removed. It is not statesmanship to shut your eyes to obstacles if they do exist. Suppose I wish to go out

on a journey, and I find that it is raining, it is pouring, I certainly take a raincoat and an umbrella rather than sit down at the door and try by means of astronomical calculations to find out what is the cause of the rain or whether the rain is opportune or not. It is one thing to find out causes; it is another thing to take note of the effects which those causes produce. At the present moment India is in such a condition that, most unfortunately, it is impossible for the various communities to take that broad view regarding the main interests of the country as a whole which one would have expected in such a critical period in the history of the country. We, Sir, the Delegates to this Conference, whether we are representatives or not, at least all of us have had the advantage of an education which, I may say, has been to a large extent very liberal. Many of us have had the additional advantage that we have had a liberal education in India supplemented by a liberal education in England. And, after all, what is it that we have achieved as the result of our two years' labour in this Conference? The Round Table Conference has not been without its lessons. It has on the one hand dispelled the vile calumny that the British Parliament wants to put obstacles in the way of Indian constitutional advance. There is not a single Delegate here who can say that he has not been deeply impressed by the fervour, the ardour, the single-minded devotion of the attempt that has been made, under most unfavourable circumstances, in order to help us to solve our own difficulties and to render our task of constitution-making easy and smooth. But after two years' labour what is it that we have recorded? You have read it out this morning, Sir. We have placed before the whole civilised world the record of our dismal failure to adjust our differences. If we, educated and cultured people, who have been selected with some care by the Government of India to come here and discuss and try to arrive at a common agreement regarding the future constitution of our country, could not get rid of our communal bias and could not take a broad vision of the future, what do you expect of the illiterate masses in India to whom religion is everything, superstition is one of the mainsprings of whose action, and who naturally cannot be expected to take that tolerant and catholic view which you might naturally expect from a body of educated men?

It is no use saying that there is not an actual communal problem in India. The problem is there and it has been reflected in the work of the Round Table Conference ever since we set foot in this country. I say therefore that instead of trying to deceive ourselves and to deceive the world that there is no communal trouble in India, it is much better to take note of the fact that for at least some time to come this condition of things is bound to remain, and meanwhile it should be our earnest endeavour, by whatever means may be in our power, so to adjust the path of political advance that those who are at the present moment suspicious of one another may learn that true patriotism really transcends all communal considerations. To learn that, in order to affect the greatest possible good for our own country, we have got to recognise the fact that it is only by mutual

toleration, trust and goodwill that we can put forward all our efforts in order to achieve what we think to be best in the interests of our country.

Now, Sir, I will not waste your time by going through all the arguments that have been advanced for the case of Muslim representation in Bengal, but I will very briefly refer to one or two memoranda which have been circulated and which contain certain observations which I think require careful consideration.

I refer, Sir, in the first instance to a note circulated by my esteemed friend and leader, Mr. Basu, which has been endorsed by Dr. Narendra Nath Law word for word, as he has told us at this Conference. Mr. Basu says that the Hindus were given by the Lucknow Pact as much as sixty per cent. representation in the Bengal Legislature, out of consideration to their superior education, culture and the contributions that they have made to the general advancement of the Province. Now, Sir, in the year 1916 when this Pact was completed I happened to have the privilege of being in the Congress and the Muslim League and I took a not insignificant part in bringing about that Lucknow Pact. I know that the reason which actuated us in consenting to that extra weightage to the Hindu community in Bengal was not the consideration that they were entitled to it by any of the reasons to which reference has been made by Mr. Basu, but by reason of the fact that at that particular moment, owing to certain causes to which I need not refer, the Muslim world was in a ferment, and the Indian Mussulmans in particular, out of spite for the Government, wanted to come into some sort of agreement with the Hindu community to put forward a demand for the political advance of the country. I find that my remarks on this point have caused a certain amount of merriment; but I am not drawing on my imagination, as will be apparent from the fact that the Government of Bengal in its Despatch on the proposals for constitutional reform have themselves made certain remarks from which I will make a very short quotation:—

> "The annulment of the Partition of Bengal and the unsettling of that settled fact on the 12th December, 1911, had shaken the faith of the Muslims in the pledges and promises of British statesmen. The dubious attitude and policy of England during the Turko-Italian and Balkan Wars had also distracted and disturbed the Muslim mind. This drove the younger men of the Muslim League into the arms of the Congress, and resolutions passed by the League in 1913 bear unmistakable traces of Congress influence. Then came the Great War, in which Turkey was ranged on the side of the enemies of the Empire, and this sorely tried and strained the loyalty of the Muslims. Advantage was taken of this by Mr. Gandhi, who subsequently developed it into what he styled as the 'Khilafat wrong' and some Muslims were led to accept the Pact: but in reality the Lucknow Pact gave the Muslims

nothing substantial. By a clever gesture of peace and goodwill . . . . . ."

I hope that this gesture will be forthcoming in the Round Table Conference on the present occasion,

> "—the Congress politician succeeded in securing the acquiescence of a handful of young and inexperienced politicians of the Muslim League to the relegation of the Muslims to the position of a minority in every Province in India, including the Provinces of Bengal and Punjab, where they constituted a majority. Disillusionment followed soon, and the Muslims of Bengal and Punjab bitterly rue the Pact to this day."

This, Sir, is what the Government of Bengal has said about the Lucknow Pact. I think the less said about that Lucknow Pact the better. Responsible leaders amongst the Hindus themselves have repudiated the Pact and so far as Muslims are concerned every Muslim leader of any importance has since then seen that this Pact resulted in grave injustice to Muslims in the Punjab and Bengal, and they have repudiated it. I would refer also to what Mr. Das did in Bengal, admitting the position that Muslims should have sixty per cent. in the Bengal Legislature. That is known as the Bengal Pact, although it was thrown overboard by the Congress at a subsequent session. The fact remains that even in Bengal under certain conditions the Muslims wanted a certain amount of extra advantage given them to bring them up to the level of the other communities and enable them to take a proper share in the political activities of the country. Now Mr. Basu has remarked that the Government of India supported this Pact. As a matter of fact that Government did nothing of the kind. The Government of India protested strongly against the injustice done to Bengal and Sir William Vincent appended a separate note, strongly criticising the proportion proposed in the Pact for Bengal Muslims. Mr. Basu has said that recent elections in Bengal has shown that a majority of electors represented on local bodies have consisted of Muslims, and he argues that without a separate electorate, if Muslims are allowed to vote freely on a common register, they would be able to secure a proper representation. That argument to my mind involves an obvious fallacy. His statement is a misrepresentation of the realities of the situation. Well, what happened as a matter of fact is that in 27 local bodies out of 83, Muslims were able to secure a certain majority, but they are still in a minority in the rest of the local bodies. The Government of Bengal refers to this argument at page 92 of its Despatch on the proposals for constitutional reform:—

> " A reference has been made to the district board elections in Bengal, particularly East Bengal; but while example has been cited from Eastern Bengal, nothing has been said of Western Bengal. In the former, Muslim population is on an average 70 to 80 per cent., and that is why Muslims

are returned in large numbers. But what about Western Bengal, where conditions are just the reverse? On a reference to Appendix G of the Government of Bengal's publication entitled, ' Resolution Reviewing the Reports on the Working of District Boards in Bengal, during the year 1928-29 ', it will be seen that out of 15 districts that comprise East Bengal, the percentage of Muslim members of district boards is over 50 per cent. in 11 only; whereas out of 11 districts in West Bengal, the percentage of Muslim members varies between 4 per cent. and 23 per cent. in eight of them. The percentage of total Muslim members of district boards, taking both East and West Bengal, is only 40·8 per cent. It must be remembered that these figures include members who have been appointed by Government to adjust the communal balance. Almost the same percentage will be found in the local boards, and in the union boards it is still less. From this it will be apparent that, even taking the perponderating Muslim population of East Bengal with that of West Bengal, Muslims scarcely have a fair chance of being returned in adequate numbers through joint electorates."

Now, Sir, that being the position, I submit that it is not fair to us to say that the Muslims have got such a position in Bengal that separate electorates for them, even temporarily, cannot be considered to be a necessity.

Mr. Basu has also referred to the fact that separate electorates have lead to the formation in the Bengal Legislative Council of communal parties. This is the unkindest cut of all, because this is absolutely untrue. I say with the utmost emphasis that, although the Mussulmans have been enjoying these separate electorates for twenty years, they have never utilised these separate electorates to further their selfish ends or to advance communal interests. At the present moment in Bengal, as Mr. Basu himself must be well aware, the biggest group, the Praja Party, consists of a large number of Hindus and Mussulmans on a basis which has nothing whatever to do with communal considerations.

Then Mr. Basu says that communal electorates lead to communal strife. This is exactly what they do not do. If you have communal electorates, the voter and candidate belong to the same community and there is no necessity to appeal to communal passions. On the other hand, if you have a joint electorate it is likely that the candidates themselves will appeal to communal passions and thereby give rise to communal strife. As a matter of fact, only the other day at a place called Howrah, in Bengal, at a municipal election the voters actually came to blows and broke each other's heads on account of communal disturbance.

I am afraid I have taken too much of your time already, and I shall now conclude my remarks with one or two general observations. Englishmen have been brought up in an atmosphere of representative institutions. They are partial to their own system

of government, and consider it is almost the counsel of perfection. They therefore deem it their duty to bestow the benefits of this system on other people and especially on the people of India. But I submit, Sir, that this duty, which is more or less of a sentimental character, must be subordinate to the higher duty of keeping inviolate the pledges given to Indians by the Queen's Proclamation, which has been repeated by successive Sovereigns. The Queen's Proclamation granted to every one in India, to every British subject, the security of his political rights and privileges.

Whatever step you may take in India you cannot ignore the fact that every subject of His Majesty there, whether he comes forward to state his views or not, reposes confidence in you that you will do nothing which will imperil his political existence. If there is a conflict between these two duties, I submit most respectfully that the duty enjoined on you by the solemn pledges of your Sovereigns ought to prevail, and therefore I submit to you that you should never forget the fact that in the constitutional reforms which you are going to introduce into India, you must not imperil the well-being of those inarticulate masses whose interests have always been your most sacred charge.

Before concluding, I wish to refer to the observations made by Sir A. P. Patro in the course of his remarks this morning. I entirely agree with him that you can make and you should make a beginning by conferring provincial autonomy on the Provinces, even under the present Government of India Act. If you wait for the time to come when you can have responsibility at the Centre as well, you may have to wait for years and years.

The Lord Chancellor has said that we have collected the materials and that possibly we may have made out a plan for our future actions. I do not think we have been able to collect all the materials yet. It will take some time even to collect the materials; it will take some time to fill in the details in the plan you are going to make, and one does not know how many years it will take before you can finally build the structure; but, under the Government of India Act, even as it stands, with necessary amendments, you can, by means of transferring subjects, have complete Provincial autonomy at the present moment. That would be something like a good advance towards the ultimate goal that we have in view. I believe that if Provincial autonomy is introduced here and now, at the present moment, it will give the various communities an opportunity of coming together for common action, and I believe that this common action and common endeavour will generate, in the minds of those who are working for the common good, that much needed goodwill which will dissipate the atmosphere of communalism which at the present moment seems to prevail over India.

Then, Sir, I agree with my friend, Dr. Narendra Nath Law—with many of whose other observations I could not agree—that Bengal should be treated much more generously in the matter of finances than she has been in the past. I am reminded of the

story of a small boy who was asked when he was born. He said "I do not know when I was born; all that I know is that I have got a stepmother". So far as Bengal is concerned, we have always received most stepmotherly treatment, both at the hands of the Government of India and, unfortunately, at the hands of the Government here. Those who are responsible for the adjustment of finances seem to forget that, with the largest population of any Province in India, Bengal has been left with the most slender resources to carry on the work of even ordinary administration. It is no use conferring responsibility on the people of Bengal, or granting us Provincial autonomy, if you do not give us the funds with which to carry on our work for political advancement. You take away four crores every year as a tax on jute, but you leave it to the Government of Bengal to take all possible measures for the improvement of jute, and for looking after the health of the cultivators, to take such other steps as may be necessary to get as much out of jute as may be possible. I submit that this arrangement is neither just nor fair.

I will not take up your time by going into details, but I entirely agree with everything that has been said by Sir Provash Chunder Mitter and by Dr. Narendra Nath Law this morning, that in the matter of financial treatment Bengal should be treated more generously than she has been in the past.

As regards the electorates themselves, I would only wish to say that it is my considered opinion, shared by all the Muslims of Bengal who have at all considered that matter, that the various special electorates that now exist ought to go. There, in Bengal, we have got, for instance, seats given to the Marwari Association, the landlords, traders, moneylenders and the like. A handful of Marwari gentlemen living in Calcutta have a right to send a representative to the Bengal Legislative Council. People object to separate electorates for Muslims, but have not a word to say as regards the separate electorates for Marwari foreigners in Calcutta. Then there is the Association of Moneylenders, which does not contain on its roll one single Muslim member. Two hundred and thirteen of them have the privilege of returning one member to the Legislature, whereas in the general electorate I have got a constituency of twenty-one thousand voters. That is not only a disparity, but it is rank injustice on the people to foist on the electorate a special representation of that kind. I submit, Sir, that all these special electorates must be made to disappear.

As regards the landlords, they certainly deserve representation, but that will be found, as we have pointed out in the memorandum, in the communal quota that has been assigned to the various communities. Sir, I submit lastly that our Hindu friends have got nothing to fear if the Mussulmans get a slight majority in the Legislature. At the present moment they have got the entire administration in their hands; in the public services they are in an overwhelming number. To take an average, it works out at about ninety per cent.; and, after all, even supposing the Muslims were fifty or fifty-one per cent. in the Legislature, what have our Hindu

friends to fear? Sir, I submit that, so far as this particular matter is concerned, our friends should come forward with a generous gesture, give the Mussulmans a chance to see that they have got friends in the other communities and that they will be given an equal opportunity to work measures for the common good.

Prime Minister, I wish now to say a few words regarding the Muslim case in Assam. In the memorandum of agreement which we have submitted, we have suggested that the Muslims in Assam should have representation to the extent of thirty-five per cent. of the whole Legislature. My friend Mr. Barooah, in a memorandum circulated to the Minorities Committee has taken exception to this, on the ground that the Muslims in Assam constitute only thirty-two per cent. of the population and are not therefore entitled to thirty-two per cent. in the Legislature. Assuming, even, that the facts were as stated by Mr. Barooah, there could have been nothing incongruous if the Assam Muslims had got a slight weightage of only three per cent. The Congress resolution concedes to the Muslims of Assam reservation of seats on the population basis with weightage in the form of the right to contest additional seats. Mr. Abdul Matin Chaudhry, who represents the Mussulmans of the entire Province of Assam in the Legislative Assembly, has been pressing for forty per cent. of seats for the Mussulmans in the Assam Council. The Province of Assam consists of two distinct areas, the electoral area and the Hill Districts or Backward Tracts, which have not got the right to elect representatives to the Legislature. In the electoral or enfranchised area the Mussulmans form thirty-five per cent. of the population and the demand of the Mussulmans of Assam for forty per cent. of seats in the Assam Council is consistent with the Congress Resolution of reservation on population basis with weightage which has been conceded to the Mussulmans of Assam. Mr. Barooah has raised the question of transfer of Sylhet District to Bengal. On this question the Muslim opinion in Assam is emphatic and unequivocal. The Mussulmans of Assam are strongly opposed to the suggested re-distribution of territories, as it will reduce the proportion of the Mussulmans in the Province from thirty-five to less than twenty per cent. Besides, if self-determination has any meaning, Sylhet cannot be transferred to Bengal against the wishes of the inhabitants of the district who are preponderatingly Muslim.

Sir Padamji Ginwala: Mr. Prime Minister, I intend to confine my observations to one or two of the many problems which the Conference has been investigating for the last year or more. I propose, first of all, to deal briefly with only one aspect of what are described as safeguards, and then with the future military budget. If time permits, I shall say a few words about the future procedure which this Conference might adopt.

On the question of safeguards, perhaps it is just as well to remember that all of us have got into wrong habits of mind, and, as my friend, Sir Cowasji Jehangir, pointed out, there are obsessions on both sides of the House. But I would put it rather this way: safeguards have been demanded by one side and safeguards

have been refused by the other because, as I have just said, we have got into a wrong frame of mind. We are looking at the constitution as it stands to-day and we have not sufficiently realised how differently the constitution would look if some only of the reforms about which you have been talking are introduced. I need not remind the House that the constitution that we are working at present in India, especially at the Centre, is a constitution which creates irresponsibility both on the part of the Government and on the part of the Opposition. Here there is a Government in a perpetual minority, and an Opposition in a perpetual majority. The result of that is that there is suspicion—continuous suspicion—on the part of the Opposition; and it must be so. Even in this country, supposing there was an Opposition which saw no chance of Office within any measurable period of time, would you expect any sense of responsibility from such an Opposition?—not that there is much even to-day at times. But if, as in India, the Opposition is always in opposition, well, it is its business to oppose and it opposes. From that you are apt to imagine that when this Opposition comes into power it will behave in precisely the same way.

Now if that is the idea underlying political advance, then I have nothing to say; but if we suppose that some real responsibility will be transferred and that the Opposition when it comes into power will be responsible for the ordinary discharge of the functions of Government, then I do not see why there should be so much emphasis laid on what are now regarded as safeguards. We on this side refuse to give these safeguards in the form demanded by some because we still imagine that the Government would remain what it is like to-day. We forget that the Government would be constituted on a different footing, and that the safeguards that we are now refusing ought to be the safeguards which we for our own protection ought to agree to, and in our own interests.

So far we have had no real concrete proposals as regards these safeguards, and it is impossible to judge what is really asked for and what is really refused; but I submit, Sir, that when you do come eventually to define these safeguards more precisely they must fulfil three conditions. First, the safeguards must be adequate. They must be adequate for all purposes which we can foresee. Secondly—and this is much more important—they must be practical. It is no use aiming at safeguards which really cause irritation without serving any practical purpose. Lastly, they must be consistent with the constitution which we have in mind. You cannot have safeguards which destroy, so to say, the spirit of the constitution which you are about to introduce. Any safeguards proposed which do not fulfil all these three conditions should be summarily rejected.

Now, Sir, I do not wish to go into all the safeguards. I wish to touch only on those safeguards which I consider necessary in the interests of India and of those safeguards I only wish to refer to those which might affect the credit of India. Though I see the Mahatma in front of me, I am thoroughly impenitent on one point.

I have not yet been reconciled to his philosophy, which means rebellion against all material civilisation. I am one of those who believe that the political advancement of any country—it does not matter what country it is—does not depend so much on the kind of constitution it may possess, as upon the improvement of its material resources. Of course, a state of society is conceivable in which one has few wants, either as regards food or as regards clothing, but having regard to the good of the country as a whole, I maintain that it is by improvement in the material conditions of India that we have to look for its advancement in all directions, including political advancement. For that purpose what is the essential requisite? Money, more money, and still more money.

It is true that we have a population of three hundred and fifty million people, and if it was all mobilised we might be able to do without machinery or capital, but human labour alone cannot supply the needs of the country. We cannot improve the conditions of our labour, and raise the standards of our life merely by mobilising our labour. We want capital for that purpose. So far as I am concerned, I will get the capital the country requires from any source which may be available to me, and under any conditions—any reasonable conditions—which the lender may impose upon me. It is not for the man who wants money to impose conditions upon the man who wishes to lend it. Even this great country, with all its resources, had recently a very bitter lesson on that point. It could not find all the money that it wanted unless it submitted to the conditions which the creditor thought he ought to impose upon the country. If you want somebody else's money you have to satisfy him as regards the security that he is prepared to accept. It is no good your saying to him that you are offering to him something which is better than the security for which he is asking. You have to satisfy him that the security which he wants is a good one, and on no other condition will the creditor part with his money.

Now, I do not look on these safeguards in connection with credit at all as safeguards which are imposed upon us. These are safeguards which I am willing to offer to my creditor. I have borrowed his money and I mean to repay it, and I want to assure him that, whatever happens, his money is safe in my hands. That is how I look on this question of safeguards. It is not a question of the Secretary of State or Parliament or anybody else dictating to us what we should give. It is our duty to offer to our creditor, whoever he may be, the assurance that his money is safe in our hands, not only because we ought to respect his rights as they exist at present, but in order that we may induce him hereafter to lend us his money on the same favourable terms as before.

At the present moment, what security has the creditor got in India? I do not wish to enter into any constitutional discussion on this point at all. I look upon it purely as a matter of business. The creditor just now knows that he has a charge upon the revenues of India for his debt, but a mere charge will not satisfy a prudent creditor unless he has also the means of enforcing it in

some way or another. As I say, I do not wish to go into the Government of India Act on this point at all, but the creditor has believed up to now that there is some power somewhere, the exercise of which will protect his rights and ensure that sufficient provision would be made under all circumstances to meet his claims. There are these two things; first, he has a charge upon the revenues of India, and secondly he knows that there is some power somewhere—and he does not care where it is—which would be exercised if there was any difficulty in securing to him his claims.

Now, I do not say that it is necessary that at the present moment we should consider what securities we should give him at all; what I say is that he must be assured that his security is in no way changed by the transfer of responsibility from the present Government to the future Government of India. It may be that other means may be devised by which the creditor may be satisfied, but we must be perfectly sure that he is satisfied that his position under the future Government of India will be no worse than it has been until now.

It has been suggested that this is to put the creditor in the position of a mortgagee in possession. If that is the legal effect, then so far as I am concerned it will not disturb my peace of mind at all; for so long as I owe him money he must have his remedy against me. Therefore, in whatever constitution you may devise provision must be made that the rights of the creditors of India are properly secured.

Of course, I am arguing on the assumption, which is not denied, that we are not going to get Dominion Status at one step. It is admitted, I think, by all sides except the Mahatmaji and those who agree with him that there is a transitional stage during which some provision has to be made to see that neither the machinery of Government breaks down nor the credit of India suffers in any way; but so long as there is this transitional period I do not see how we can escape some of these safeguards.

Now, Sir, I wish to deal with the military budget. I have followed with very close attention the deliberations of the Federal Structure Committee—this year at any rate, though I have not been a member of it—and the discussions which have turned upon this question. It is generally agreed that so long as India is in need of the British Army the control of the Army must remain with the Governor-General, and the discussion has proceeded on the question by whom the Minister should be appointed and what his position ought to be, or whether he should be an Indian or whether he should be a non-Indian. That, to my mind, is a small matter compared to the question of some control over the military budget. The only discussion on this point that took place, at any rate whilst I attended the meetings of the Federal Structure Committee, was that the military budget should be put on what may briefly be described as the contract basis—that is to say, a certain sum of money should be handed over to the military authorities during a certain period, and that periodically that amount should

be revised. Now, I submit, Sir, that that is very bad finance. If you hand over a certain sum of money to anybody—it does not matter who it is; it may be your son, to whom you are giving a fixed allowance—there is no guarantee that the money would be properly spent or that there would be any economy in expenditure. A man who has got a fixed sum of money given to him by another takes good care that he spends the whole of the money. Not only that, but he may enter, during the subsistence of the contract, into commitments of such a nature that when the time comes for revising his allowance the position may be such that you may have not only to agree to the sum formerly allowed but you may have to increase it. That, you would agree, has many disadvantages.

In the first place, as I have said, it would not lead to any economy; but that is small as compared to another disadvantage which I shall presently mention. That is that it will not familiarise the Assembly with military expenditure. Any man who has been in charge of the smallest department will tell you that unless he is in frequent and constant touch with the money that is spent by that department, he learns little about the work of the department. Of all experts I believe military experts are the biggest tyrants. There is no getting away from the military expert. Even this great Government here is ridden by experts, military and other. But the military expert is the one individual who has to be constantly kept under check, especially as regards expenditure. If the Assembly or any part of it has got no grip at all on this question, the time will never come when you will cease to say that the Assembly had no experience as regards Army management and military expenditure, and therefore that it would not be safe to transfer military control to the Assembly.

Now, Sir, personally, I would have been willing that the present system had remained, under which the military budget, is, of course, in so many words, not subject to the debate of the Assembly, but is brought under debate. Lord Reading will remember that when he was Viceroy a resolution was adopted by the Assembly. It was unanimously adopted, excluding the official members; every European member also supported the resolution, that, under the discretionary powers that the Governor-General had under the Statute, for the period of one year the military budget might be submitted to debate. Lord Reading, the foremost lawyer of his country of his time, was not so sure of his law, and is said to have taken legal advice. He was told that though according to the letter of the constitution that was possible, it would not be consistent with the spirit of the constitution, and therefore even that modest request of trying the Assembly for a year was not granted.

Therefore it is no use my suggesting that that should be done; on both sides of the House there would be opposition, because that would imply power in the Governor-General to restore rejected grants, and I am not making that proposal. But I shall make one proposal, and that is this: that you must have, as you have now to-day in connection with civil expenditure, a standing Finance

Committee in charge of military expenditure before which the budget must be placed by the Military Minister and the Military Department. That budget must be scrutinised—*in camera* if you like, if you are afraid some injury may be done to the public interest by disclosure. *In camera* if you like, but that budget must be placed before this Finance Committee and scrutinised and an appeal must lie to the Governor-General if there is no agreement between the Standing Finance Committee and the military authorities when the budget is being considered. That would at any rate give a part of the Assembly the opportunity of studying military expenditure and familiarising itself with Army management.

Further, I would have another Committee, corresponding to the Public Accounts Committee which we have in connection with civil expenditure, solely in charge of military expenditure, so that there is at least a post-mortem on expenditure—I do not know whether it does much good—but anyhow it enables the Assembly to see whether the money has been properly spent.

And I would further suggest—I do not know whether our constitution will provide for it—that there must be an Appropriation Bill as regards the military expenditure, which would give the whole House some opportunity of raising a debate on questions with which it may be competent to deal.

I would now make a few suggestions as regards future procedure. It has been said that this Conference has been a failure because really it has not been able to come to agreement on many of the points. My submission to you, Sir, is that that is not a correct statement of the case. In a Conference such as this consisting of a hundred odd members you cannot possibly arrive at agreements on controversial points. You can only gather general impressions on different aspects of the problems under discussion. You cannot come to any conclusions, much less to any agreement until you are at grips with the actual question. It is rather a pity that at some earlier stage, small committees were not appointed to go into important controversial questions. I hope it is not too late even now for some of these important questions to be transmitted to small committees, the members of which sit round a small table and within reachable distance of one another, so that important issues such as these may be discussed and conclusions arrived at. I go further.

I maintain that this Conference should not be dissolved and I will tell you why. In the Federal Structure Committee there was a good deal of discussion from another point of view, but the point of view I wish to place before you is this: that however much you may agree in this Committee, whatever measure of agreement there may be on certain points, that will not avail you unless there is agreement when the whole picture is before us, when we see the constitution in black and white. It is only then that it will be possible for people to express an opinion about it, and to agree or to disagree. I submit, Sir, that this Conference—or another Conference if you wish to call one—should be here when

that time comes, for unless agreement is reached at that stage it will lead us nowhere. We should be precisely where we are now. Therefore it is of far greater importance that a future Conference should be convened, in this form or any other, at which the whole constitution can be considered in its more or less final state, and when we are really in a position to express an opinion.

In the meanwhile, I would make one suggestion. If there has been no unanimity on many questions there is one, I think, on which there has been unanimity. That is as regards the Depressed Classes, the removal of untouchability. I do not believe that there is any one in this House who will not agree that this great blot on Indian civilisation should be removed as soon as possible. Even if this Conference fails on other points, and I hope that it will not, if it succeeds in devising something by which this untouchability can be removed, it will have done good work. My suggestion is that this Conference must give expression to the opinion that swift and clear action should be taken, by Statute if necessary, to remove untouchability. I say "by Statute" for this reason! There have been declarations in statutes, in proclamations and elsewhere, where you have said that you will not interfere with the social customs or religious customs of the people, and therefore I think that no Indian Legislature can deal with a question like that, and for that purpose it may be advisable to consider whether a Statute should not be passed. But before such a Statute could be passed a commission of enquiry should be set up in order to see how far by legislation it is possible to remove untouchability. As regards religion, I say nothing, but as regards other aspects of untouchability the commission of enquiry for the whole of India should be charged with the duty of determining how far and in what directions by legislation this untouchability can be removed. I say that we are all agreed on this that this must be removed and shall be removed, and it is for you, Sir, to make the proposal, because, as you may find that no Indian Legislature really can deal amply with the question until you have removed the bar which lies in the way of Indian legislation. The sooner this thing is accomplished the better it will be from all points of view. One great difficulty which has been in our way in the solution of the minorities problem has been the question of the Depressed Classes, and you will have gone a long way towards removing that difficulty when you have taken steps to do away with this evil of untouchability and to improve the condition of the Depressed Classes.

Mr. Giri: Mr. Prime Minister, I am speaking to-day on the work of the Round Table Conference on behalf of the Indian Labour Delegation. I have followed the proceedings of the last Session as well as this one with great care and attention, but I regret to say that it is not clear to me nor to my colleagues what stage of deliberation or decision we have reached at the present moment. The proposals of His Majesty's Government are not before us, and we have had no indication whatsoever as to their nature, beyond disquieting reports as to the policy that is going to be pursued

hereafter. We are left to speculate for ourselves, and to draw such inferences as we can from the work of the various sub-Committees.

Proceeding on the assumption that this is the final Session of the Conference, we are bound to say that its results must be written down largely as a failure. The original intention underlying the plan of this Conference, as was stated by Lord Irwin as Viceroy in July of last year, was to arrive at the greatest possible measure of agreement on the constitutional questions relating to India, and to formulate proposals based on such agreement for presentation to Parliament. We cannot help feeling that there has been a radical departure from that course at this Session of the Conference. Comparatively minor issues have been given undue prominence, whilst vital matters relating to the establishment of full responsible government for all India have been forced through a hurried discussion devoid of all sense of reality. It is a matter of deep disappointment to us that the Government's views on some of these issues were not placed before the sub-Committees, and that no attempt was made at an agreement in line with the general consensus of opinion.

We who represent here the workers of India have a special point of view which has been urged at the different stages of the work of the sub-Committees. The failure to arrive at a settlement of the minorities problem amongst ourselves is no doubt unfortunate. We cannot, however, bring ourselves to believe that this should be regarded as an insuperable obstacle in the way of India's political progress. In the first place, this problem would not have attained the magnitude it has done if this Conference had been representative in adequate measure of the workers and masses of India. Perhaps it is natural that in this gorgeous setting, with the voices of the capitalist classes dominant, attention should have been concentrated on the distribution of seats in the Legislatures and powers to the public services amongst the members of the various religions to the prejudice of the needs of the starving and illiterate masses. Secondly, on the failure of the Minorities sub-Committee to settle all outstanding points, the opportunity should have been taken, in our view, without further loss of time by the Government, for a prompt decision. The claims of the various minorities have been before us for detailed consideration, and it should have been an easy matter for the Government to lay down the principles of a decision just to all concerned. Such a course would have enabled our Conference to complete its work at this very Session. Even at this late stage we venture to think that it is not too late to adopt this procedure in order to avert failure. Otherwise the charge is likely to be made that the Government, by evading its responsibilities in the matter, contributed in no small measure towards the breakdown of this Conference.

In our opinion the proper division of a community for electoral purposes should be on the basis of occupation rather than of religion or race. Differences based on these latter considerations have little relation to the questions that come up normally before the Legislatures. So far as the workers of India are concerned

we have, to the best of our ability, made their position clear in our statement submitted at the last meeting of the Minorities sub-Committee. If our suggestion is not adopted, and special constituencies as demanded by other classes (economic or religious), are created, the workers should have special constituencies of their own with seats reserved in the Legislature in accordance with their population.

We have also asked for a declaration of fundamental rights to be incorporated in the constitution. In view, however, of the insistance of certain sections on a system of separate electorates based on religion or class, we feel that provision should be made in the Constitution whereby no person, of whatever faith or religion, would be compelled to vote for, or seek the suffrage of members of his own faith or religion unless he is prepared to deny himself the right of exercising his franchise.

We feel that such a class of persons would represent the best mind of India. It is absolutely necessary to make that provision, not only in the interests of the country as a whole, but particularly of the integrity and healthy growth of the workers' movement. They are workers first and workers last, and we shall regard it as a great misfortune, if workers are to be forced, for the purpose of asserting their civic and political rights, into religious and sectarian divisions.

We are in a small minority at this Conference and may not be able to secure acceptance for our proposal for elections to the Legislature from occupational, instead of territorial constituencies. But at least we must be allowed to protect the solidarity of the workers, so that, as they grow in influence and strength, the divisions of parties in India may develop on economic lines.

Mr. Joshi raised an important question in this Session of the Federal Structure sub-Committee in regard to bringing labour legislation under the jurisdiction of the Federal Legislature, without depriving the Provincial Legislatures of concurrent powers, and also vesting the power to ratify international labour conventions on behalf of the whole of India in the federal authorities. Though no conclusion has yet been reached in the Committee, it is some consolation to us that its importance has been recognised and it will come up for further consideration at a later stage. We must re-affirm our view that unless these points are conceded, the interests of workers will not be ensured in the new constitution and the Federation will not be of any use to them. We must also repeat that without adult suffrage, there can be no real self-government for the masses of India, because we hold that self-government is an instrument primarily for the uplift of the masses and not for the benefit of a privileged few.

Our general view is that in the new Legislatures, every class and every interest must be adequately represented. From this it follows that we cannot support the principle of weightage, or reserving seats in excess of the population ratio, whether it be for any particular class or for the Indian States. We stand for

a democratic system of Government, through wholly elected Legislatures both from British Indian Provinces and from the Indian States. The democratic principle and the nature of responsible government in India will be watered down if we permit nominations from the States and concede, in addition, more seats than they are entitled to on the basis of population.

With regard to the composition and powers proposed for the Federal Legislature, we favour a single-chamber Legislature, because we regard a bi-cameral system, especially one in which both Houses have equal powers, as a needless impediment to progress. There would be less objection to the establishment of an Upper Chamber having only a suspensory veto upon the legislative proposals of the Lower Chamber. But as the Report of the Federal Structure Committee now stands, we cannot accept the proposal for a bi-cameral legislature, with the two Houses having practically equal powers.

Nor, again, can we see the advantage, from the workers' standpoint, of a Federation for all-India, unless the Federal Government has the authority and the power to levy, by means of direct taxation if necessary, the funds it may require for carrying out all its obligations.

We are not, indeed, against a federal form of government. But our concern is to see that it is truly representative of all the people of India, from British India as well as from the Indian States, and does not consist merely of the wealthier classes and the nominees of the Princes. Moreover, a federation would be satisfactory only when all the constituent parts are willing to make equal sacrifices. But in the plan proposed by the Federal Structure sub-Committee, the Indian States do not appear to us to make those sacrifices, either in respect of powers or of finance.

On the other hand, they seem to benefit at the cost of British India. Also we would like to state that, in our opinion, it would be wrong to insert any provision in the constitution which would prevent the Government in India in the future from holding or resuming, for the use of the community, all the natural resources of the country, or even make it difficult for the Government to do so.

There is one other matter to which I must refer in passing. The Burma Round Table Conference has no representatives on it of Indian labour in Burma. Whether Burma decides in favour of separation and has a constitution framed accordingly or not, the problems relating to Indian labour, both resident and immigrant, must receive proper consideration, as the Royal Commission on Labour has pointed out in its Report. I hope that it may still be possible to make good that omission.

We do not know at present what are the intentions of the Government regarding the future. If they are still contemplating, notwithstanding the warnings of Delegates representing almost every section, the introduction of partial reforms without an immediate grant of Central responsibility, we feel that the country, as a whole, will be plunged into a general movement of discontent

and agitation, resulting in widespread upheaval. Wise statesmanship would prevent, by conceding what has long been overdue to India, such a catastrophe.

The present economic crisis in India is acute beyond a parallel, and the plight of the workers, whether industrial or agricultural, is desperate. So long as the political problem is not solved, no serious attempt is possible for tackling the grave economic and social problems confronting them. Any delay, therefore, in the grant of full responsibility to India, in a manner that will ensure the proper representation of the workers in the Legislatures, will provoke reactions which will be disastrous to the cause of peace and ordered progress.

Khan Bahadur Hidayat Husain: Mr. Prime Minister, you have called this Conference to-day, in order to receive the Third and Fourth Reports of the Federal Structure Committee and the Second Report of the Minorities Committee, and to discuss the whole field of the work of the Conference. I cannot, Sir, but own to a feeling of shame and humiliation when on receiving the Minorities Report I find that the basic fabric of the future constitution of India, the communal question, remains unsolved. But I hope that you, Sir, and the distinguished statesmen sitting to your left (Lord Sankey) and right (Sir Samuel Hoare) will bear me out when I say that though it may be our misfortune—the misfortune of the Muslims—it is not our fault that the communal question remains unsettled. Our efforts to arrive at a solution of the problem have been earnest and consistent, and if we have failed it is not because there has been any unwillingness on our part to agree to any reasonable settlement.

Now, Sir, I am obliged to you for permitting me, the sole representative in this Conference of the Muslims of the United Provinces sitting in the Legislative Council of that Province, to say a few words as to our attitude towards the great problem of the political advancement of India. Hailing as I do from a Province in which the Muslim population forms only 15 per cent. of the total, you will also perhaps expect me to say what view the Muslims of India, particularly of the minority Provinces, take with regard to the future of India.

Sir, when you wound up the proceedings of the last Conference you were pleased to say:—

> "Now, we have gone as far as we can go at this moment. You have to go back to India; we have to go back to our own public opinion. You have spoken here subject to reconsideration, subject to the reaction which your public opinion will show to your work; we, Government and Parliamentary representatives alike, have spoken in the same way, and we must also listen to reactions."

It was in this light, with this message of hope, Sir, that we went back to India in order to find out what the innermost mind of the community was with regard to the future political advancement of the country.

Sir, unfortunately no one will doubt that the differences between the two major communities of India are somewhat deep-rooted and age-long. No one who has taken any share in the settlement of those differences, at least for the political advancement of India during the last two or three years, can avoid feeling humiliated at the repeated failure of these attempts. Obviously there is no one who can step in to bring about " voluntary " peace between the two communities, but the least that can be expected of those, who, like myself, confess to humiliation by the recent fiasco is that they should desist from attempts to keep the wounds raw. It is in this spirit that I make reference to this painful incident. For India, sore tried, gored almost to death, wants an era of peace for its advancement in all branches of life, political, economic and social. But the question of peace is involved with the question of the adjustment of relations between the various communities of India. Until such time that these relations are adjusted there can be no peace. Once these are adjusted, and the political ambition of one community against another gives way to the larger and border considerations of nationalism, India will be on the way to the status which should be her own.

Some of the utterances of responsible statesmen in India, and some of their activities also serve as a sappers' and miners' contingent for the onslaught of Bolshevism in India. Willingly or unwillingly, these activities have done a lot of harm to my community as a whole. It is the Muslim that mostly suffers in the no-rent campaign. Since this campaign was started six Muslims have lost their lives in the Allahabad district and one in the Fatehpur district of my Province. It is the Muslim who mostly suffers in communal riots, where carnage, murder, looting and the rape of women and children all take place, I am sure Mahatma Gandhi will be distressed to hear, under the slogan of the Congress, " Mahatma Gandhi Kijai ".

I therefore appeal both to the Congress and to the Government to take such measures as will make the recurrence of these inhuman ebullitions impossible. I appeal to the Congress in particular, if it does not desire an aggravation of the economic difficulties, and is at all anxious to avert a practically certain outbreak of communal strife, not to resort to and conduct a campaign of civil disobedience.

It is because there is suspicion, and deep-rooted suspicion, in the minds of both communities against one another, and events which have happened since 1923, when the second instalment of the Reforms began to bear fruit, and their implications came to be appreciated, have confirmed that suspicion in the Muslim minds, that the Muslims insist on statutory safeguard of their position. The famous, historical Delhi resolution, passed by Muslims of all political parties, some of them even belonging to the Congress, is the minimum Muslim charter. Without the acceptance of its demands Muslim existence in the country is jeopardised. With these demands fully met, democracy in its truest form will be

ushered in. Without these demands no constitution which can be devised will be acceptable to the Muslims of India.

On the 16th December, 1930, the Lord Chancellor, Lord Sankey, whose name we shall ever cherish with the greatest fondness in our hearts throughout India, in presenting the interim Report of the Federal Structure sub-Committee asked us to look at that picture (Morier's painting of George II on horseback), and said that so far we had been looking at the horse on the picture, but we will soon be presented with a complete picture, and then our assistance would be wanted. I say that that completed picture is not, unfortunately, yet in sight, and the position of my community is that if it is not to be in that picture, that picture had better not be attempted at all, and if it is finished who knows but that the canvas may be reversed and the picture may be torn into bits.

In speaking last year in this Conference I made it plain that no constitution in India could work unless it gave it autonomy and responsibility. In that constitution the majorities and the minorities must have their legitimate share. The position of my community, therefore, is that we shall place no difficulty in the way of the constitutional advance of India, but as a condition precedent we insist on the settlement of the communal problem either by mutual agreement or, failing that, by the Government. We must have provincial autonomy and we must have authority in the Centre. The responsibility for the government of India according to the declarations of the British Government must rest in the hands of the Indians themselves. Parliament, once the communal question has been properly settled, must divest itself of authority not in favour of the Centre, but in favour of the Provinces, and the Provinces, as federating units, should have authority to transfer the subjects of all-India concern to the Centre. The federating Units must evolve and adjust themselves before the Centre which should follow the Provinces and not precede them, but the course of succession must be latent in the constitution itself. You cannot, however, possibly achieve any constitution without a Hindu-Muslim settlement. Mr. Jinnah the other day, speaking in the Federal Structure Committee, faithfully reflected Muslim opinion in India when he said that you cannot complete a constitution unless the minorities question is settled. Replying to those who said " Never mind, let us go on, surely we can discuss the other questions," he said that there is a grave apprehension in the minds of Muslims here and in India that if we went on participating in the structure right up to the roof and when everything was completed this constant assurance that of course the communal question must be settled may recede into the background to such an extent that we might have a finding against us *ex parte*. This is the general feeling in India. What is really thought by Muslims in India you can see from this extract from a telegram received by me only this morning by a prominent Muslim who lately left the Congress. He says, " When we passed this resolution we wished to refuse to assist in the framing of any constitution until we knew where we stood.

Whether you discuss Federal Finance, Court, or Legislature, it means that a constitution is being framed with our tacit consent leading to responsibility with or without safeguards."

Therefore, Mr. Prime Minister, let it be plainly understood that what I say here and what other Muslims say here should not be understood to mean that we are even tacitly consenting to the framing of a constitution, leading to responsibility, with or without safeguards. Indeed, Sir, we Muslim Delegates desire to be placed on record our compliance as the representatives of India with the repeated demands of our community that the Muslim community of India will on no account consider any academic schemes for federation or for the transfer of responsibility without its demands for safeguards being conceded by His Majesty's Government and by the other communities of India. Their demands are those of all the other minorities with the exception of the Sikhs, that is, of more than 46 per cent. of the people of British India according to the latest census. If, therefore, our Muslim members of the Federal Structure Committee did not leave the Committee when the discussion of reserved subjects, for example, defence, external relations, financial safeguards, and so on, began on Monday the 16th November, it was in deference to the hospitality of our hosts. Would Sir Tristram have abused the Saxon hospitality if he had discovered some unreal conversation going on at the Round Table?

Turning now to the question of all-India Federation, let me once more repeat what I submitted last year, that the idea of an all-India Federation is not so easy of consummation as its sponsors in their enthusiasm made us believe last year, and try to make us believe this year. The Maharaj Rana of Dholpur echoed the better mind when he sounded a note of warning last year. Let there be no encouragement for the Ruling Princes to come and let there be no discouragement for them to desist from entering the Federation. It must be left to their option. For them no constitution would be acceptable which does not fully take into account two fundamental principles: first, maintenance and preservation of the sovereign authority of the States; and secondly, the perpetuation of relations between the Crown and the States. The Chamber of Princes would confer on these two essentials when it meets next at Delhi, and I hope it may be possible for it to evolve some scheme which, while fully preserving the essentials, facilitates their entry into the all-India Federation. I fear, however, that it is a distant idea; it is an ideal for the future which may take time to consummate; but in the meantime no good purpose will be served by letting British India mark time till the passage of the Indian Princes is cleared. There is no reason why British Indian Provinces cannot themselves federate and create a Federal Government in the Centre for British India without the Indian States coming in. When they come in they will come in on their merits. I, for one, would ask them before they come in to create electorates for representation in the Lower House, just in the same way as in British India, and for the Upper House a system of nomination on the advice of an advisory

body composed of such elements as form the electorates for the Upper House in British India to-day. Nor do I think there is any justification in principle for giving weightage in representation to the Princes. The States when they come into Federation will come in for some specific matters. The consideration of these matters does not run any risk if weightage is denied to the States. There is no question in these few specific matters of separate interests or separate cultures being involved, and consequently on no justifiable ground could weightage be granted or conceded to the Indian States. The representation of States should be strictly proportionate to their population.

And here, Sir, let me correct my friend, Sir A. P. Patro, when he said this morning that if the Muslims of India desire 30 per cent. and if the States desire 30 per cent., what will be left for the majorities? My opinion with regard to the States is what I submitted just now. What the Muslims demand is 30 per cent. of all Federal Legislature; that is to say, it means 26 per cent., which is the actual Indian Muslim population, and 7 per cent. from the States.

Turning to the question of finances, I would give my general consent to the conclusions of the Federal Finance sub-Committee, and particularly my adherence to the suggestion of setting up an Expert Committee, contained in paragraph 4 of its Report. I am in entire accord with the principle enunciated by Mr. Rangaswami Iyengar at the sub-Committee meeting on the 2nd October, that Federal taxation should apply equally to all Units of the Federation. There should be no discrimination in the matter of financial obligations or rights working in favour of the States. There would in my opinion be a consensus of opinion that the right to levy unscheduled taxes should rest with the Provinces and States, subject to the conditions that the levy of the tax should not conflict with the Federal scheme of taxation.

It is stated in paragraph 13 of the Report that the powers of taxation enjoyed by Provincial Governments or States should be subject to the over-ruling consideration that they should not be exercised in such a manner as to conflict with internal obligations of the Federal Government under any commercial treaty or international convention. I am afraid this would be trenching on the sovereign rights of the States and would be a trespass on the residuary powers of the Provinces. My idea is that international agreements which in any manner affect the residuary powers of the federal Units should be subject to ratification by three-fourths of those Units by a system specially devised for this purpose. So should also any amendment of Income-tax legislation or statutory rules made thereunder and the exercise of emergency powers under paragraph 21. I have no doubt, as stated in paragraph 22, sub-paragraph 4, of the Report, that the rights of the Federation to call for contributions from all units and not only from British Provinces should be recognised, and therefore in modification of paragraphs

16, 17 and 18 I am of opinion that deficits in the Federal Budget should be met by contributions not only from the Provinces but also from the States.

As regards States' contributions I should not object to any enquiry which may result in the abolition of all burdens of a feudal character or which may in any manner be proved to be inequitable. I do not entirely agree with paragraph 22. I certainly think that the Federal Government should have equal power over all Federating Provinces as well as States in the matter of the time at which they should issue their loans so as to prevent any interference with other issues, Federal or Provincial. Future federal loans should also be secured not on the revenues of the Federation alone, but also on the revenues of the Provinces as well as the States.

As I am on this point let me say one word with regard to ratification of treaties relating to taxation. I am very strongly in favour of a Federal Council composed of units of administration being established. This Council should determine what treaties should be so ratified as not to entrench on the rights of the Provinces.

Then, Sir, I wish to say one word with regard to collective responsibility of the Cabinet. That is dealt with in paragraph 5 of the Report of the Provincial Constitution sub-Committee. It is true that Ministries with some kind of joint responsibility went on in Madras and the Punjab during the first few years of the Reforms, and will in all probability function in those Provinces under the new dispensation; but it is not likely that anything but the group system will work elsewhere. The Provinces are in some cases homogeneous and may be conceived to be a proper field for this experiment, but can such a system hope to succeed right at the beginning in a sub-continent like India, embracing Provinces as dissimilar as the North-West Frontier Province, the Central Provinces and Bengal, not to speak of the States with their bewildering diversity.

Indeed, the Committee itself realises the difficulty of forming an Indian Federal Cabinet on the principle of collective responsibility of Ministers (see paragraph 36). A collectively responsible Cabinet involves the interference of the Indian States in the affairs of British India "on any question that involves the existence of the Ministry, even if the matter which has given rise to the question of confidence is one primarily affecting British India only." This surely is very undesirable, as pointed out by me before.

Now I wish to touch on two other questions. As a humble member of the English Bar of nearly 27 years' standing in India, let me say, Sir, what a palladium of justice the Privy Council of India is to India. The Privy Council will for ever remain a monumental landmark in the judicial administration of India. I would strongly resist any attempt at breaking the power and responsibility of the Privy Council. A Supreme Court in India, call it a Federal Court if you will, is necessary, but the functions of the Privy Council must remain distinct and unquestioned. We in India have the

most absolute faith in the integrity of the highest Court of the Realm.

The last point, Sir, which I wanted to emphasize is the redistribution and the division of the boundaries of Provinces. The Provinces as at present constituted in India have unnatural limits and unnatural boundaries. There should be homogeneity in the Provinces, and therefore I think it is due to the Federal Structure Committee, and it is due to the Conference, to see that some machinery is set up which would place the British Provinces in India on a basis which would bring about more homogeneity and more affinity than exists to-day.

Rai Bahadur S. M. Bapna: Mr. Prime Minister, His Highness the Maharaja of Indore expected to be present at the Plenary Session of this Conference, and regrets very much that, owing to a motor accident which he had a few days ago, he is unable to come. In these circumstances he has authorised me to deliver his speech on his behalf, which with your permission, Sir, I will now proceed to do. His Highness's speech is as follows:—

Mr. Prime Minister, we have listened to the speeches of distinguished statesmen of all parties, British and Indian. It is with extreme diffidence that I follow so much ability backed up by so much experience. But the welfare of a people of three hundred and fifty millions and the attainment of India's rightful place in the world's esteem are causes so sacred that I could not return to my country unless I had served them to the best of my power. The immediate duty laid upon all of us as patriots and as privileged to be parties to these great deliberations is clear and frank speech on the difficulties that confront us and the means to overcome those difficulties.

As I was not a member of this Conference last year I feel I should indicate briefly what in my judgment would be the most suitable basis for the future constitution of federated India. In doing this, I express my appreciation for the valuable work that has been done by the Committees of this Conference. Their Reports have clarified the issues, and the members of this Conference have the advantage of being confronted with definite proposals. Thanks to the knowledge and patience and spirit of mutual accommodation which have gone to the making of these proposals, we shall not be working in darkness or ignorance.

We are all agreed that India has to advance to the status of a Dominion. Differences of opinion start only when the method and the pace come to be considered. Various methods were considered in the past and by a process of elimination, and, possibly a certain amount of evolution, the idea of an all-India Federation embracing both British India and the Indian States emerged. That seemed to provide a method and a basis that promised to facilitate agreement even on the question of the pace of the advance. But on closer examination, every one of us, I believe, has realised that the hopes entertained last year by many in and out of the Conference were

brighter than the realities of the situation justified. The coming in of the States involved the addition of an infinite number of complications to an already complex problem; and, though it might perhaps have been better for the States, and British India also, if British India had not based the entire scheme of the future constitution on the hope of an immediate entry of the States, I am aware that some of the Indian States expressed their willingness to come into an All-India Federation, in order to help British India to attain responsible government. At the same time, as this Conference will remember, their willingness to join an all-India Federation was subject to three important conditions:—

> (1) that their relationship with the British Crown in accordance with the existing treaties or engagements should remain intact, except in matters in, and to the extent to, which the States and the Crown agree to modify it;
>
> (2) that the Sovereignty and internal autonomy of the States are not affected in any way; that is to say, their integrity is fully conserved; and
>
> (3) that India remains a Dominion within the British Commonwealth of Nations.

These conditions were, and are, essential in the interests of the States, and it is but natural that every Ruling Prince should consider them as fundamental.

I, for my part, would be willing that my state should help the scheme of all-India Federation, provided the scheme satisfies the three conditions broadly set forth above. The precise form and details of the constitution shall be determined by considerations of their suitability to existing conditions. Constitutions of a federal type exist in other countries, but no two of those countries have the same set of conditions or circumstances, and therefore no two constitutions are exactly alike. Conditions in India are infinitely more complicated than elsewhere. A greater variety of interests have to be harmonised. The Indian States are *sui generis*, and an attempt to bring these sovereign States into an all-India Federation with the heretofore non-autonomous Provinces of British India has peculiar complexities. None of the existing constitutions of a Federal type can be accepted as a model. It was in view of this that the Federal Structure Committee recorded in their Report:—

> "It will be easy for the constitutional purist, citing Federal systems in widely different countries, to point out alleged anomalies in the plans which the Committee have to propose to this great end; but the Committee, as they stated in their first Report, are not dismayed by this reflection. Their proposals are the outcome of an anxious attempt to understand, to give full weight to, and to reconcile, different interests."

I entirely agree with these observations.

I have given very careful consideration to the scheme outlined last year and considered in detail again this year by the Federal Structure Committee, and I say, with the greatest respect for its advocates and adherents, that it does not provide the essential safeguards for the States, and, further, presents almost insuperable difficulties.

As I have already hinted, it would have been in the interest of British India, if the States were left out altogether at this stage and British India had independently evolved a constitution suited to its conditions. The States would, then, have considered how they would come into closer association with British India for matters of common concern. But as the decision to federate had already been taken, after much thought, I outlined a scheme that in my opinion was suited to the peculiar conditions of India, and likely to meet the requirements of the several interests, and circulated my views some time ago.

This scheme has the support of Their Highnesses of Patiala and Dholpur, Sir Prabhashanker Pattani and Sahibzada Abdus Samad Khan (representing His Highness the Nawab of Rampur) among the Rulers and representatives of States who are here, and, I understand, of several other Rulers of the States of India. As it is possible some of the members of the Conference may not have seen my note, I propose to deal briefly with the main features of my scheme, which are as follows:—

1. *The Federating Units to be*

(1) Federated British Indian Provinces, *i.e.*, British India, and

(2) The States collectively.

The States will, with the assent of the Crown, constitute themselves into an Electoral College which may be given any suitable name, *i.e.*, all the States will make one group or unit for the purpose of electing their quota of representatives to the Federal Legislature.

2. Federation to be for purposes of specified matters of common interest only.

3. *Functions.*

Policy and legislation in regard to, and administration of, certain specified subjects.

Note.—The Federal Legislature will lay down policy and enact laws relating to the subjects enumerated in Appendix A, of my note.

The States will, then, automatically pass the Federal laws as State laws and they will then come into force within the territories of the States.

In the event of failure on the part of any State to carry out the policy and laws passed, the Confederation of States will use its

influence and bring round the defaulting State through its representative; but even if that fails, which is not likely, the Federal Government will take necessary action through the Crown.

4. *Structure and Composition of Federal Government.*

(*a*) *Legislature.*—There should be preferably only one Chamber, to which representatives could be sent by States through the Electoral College referred to above. The representation of the Indian States should be 50 per cent. If it is bi-cameral, the States should have 50 per cent. representation in the Upper Chamber and on population basis in the Lower Chamber.

(*b*) *Executive.*—(i) The States need not insist on a fixed number of representatives in the Federal Executive.

(ii) The Executive will be responsible to the Legislature.

5. *Method of Election of States' Representatives.*

The States will constitute themselves into a Confederation for the purpose of Federation with British India. This will serve as an Electoral College for electing their representatives to the Federal Legislature. The Confederation will be composed of representatives of Sovereign States and of groups of the remaining States.

Major States may be allotted a fixed number of seats to ensure their individual representation, and some regional distribution may also take place. For the purpose of election, the principle of plural voting may be accepted, the number of votes allotted to a particular State depending on the State's political position, though population and income may also be given due weight. The details will be settled by the States themselves.

The representatives constituting the quota of the States will represent the States collectively and they will include among them representatives of the major States for whom seats will be reserved.

6. *Federal Finance.*

Federal finance will be found from indirect taxation only, so far as at least the States are concerned.

7. *Supreme or Federal Court and Arbitration Courts.*

There should be a Court to deal with constitutional questions only. In case the volume of work does not justify the constitution of a permanent Court, provision should be made for the constitution of a Court each time as the occasion arises, but the qualifications of the eligible personnel and the method of its constitution shall have to be specifically and definitely laid down in the constitution.

For disputes between the Crown and the Indian States provision should be made that they should be settled by an impartial Court of Arbitration, distinctly separate from the Federal Court, the constitution of which should also be defined beforehand. The Arbitration Court should also decide disputes between a State or States

and Provinces *inter se*, or between a State or States and Central Government of British India. Neither the Federal Court nor the Court of Arbitration shall exercise jurisdiction as the highest Court of Appeal.

It will be noticed that this scheme differs from the one embodied in the Reports of the Federal Structure Committee on the following main points:—

(*a*) The Federating units according to my scheme will only be two, *viz.*, British India, and the States collectively.

(*b*) The representation of the States will be collective through members elected by the Electoral College.

(*c*) The Federal laws will be adopted by the States and passed as their own laws. They will then operate within the State territories, not as Federal laws, but as State laws.

(*d*) There will be thus no new State created and consequently there will be no question of allegiance from the subjects of the Indian States to the Federal Government, as an all-India State.

(*e*) Uni-cameral Legislature preferably.

The Federal Structure Committee contemplates the component elements to be, on the one hand:—

(*a*) The Federating Provinces of British India, and, on the other hand,

(*b*) Such Indian States or groups of States as may enter the Federation.

This would, in my opinion, give rise to a number of difficulties. First of all, it would be difficult to federate non-autonomous Provinces with Sovereign Indian States individually, as some subjects will have to remain Central. Secondly, it would be difficult to come to an agreement on the allocation of seats as between British India and the Indian States and between the Indian States *inter se*. On the basis of the States federating individually, the smaller States could not be given satisfaction in the matter of representation; yet it would be impossible to expect the smaller States to go into their respective groups at one and the same time and join the Federation. The States entering the Federation at once would not be a large percentage of the entire body of the States, but they would claim the full quota of representatives allotted to the States, on the understanding that the extra seats would be released as other States came in. These difficulties can be got over by the entire body of States going into the Federation as one unit. The States would in that case, being an equal partner, be entitled to equal representation with British India. Representation in the Legislature would be collective, and not by individual units. All Sovereign States, whatever the extent of their territories or volume of revenue or population, or their salute, are entitled to representation, and this would give the smaller States a considerable amount of reassurance and satisfaction that their interests were being pro-

perly looked after by a body that had the interests of all the States alike at heart. Under this arrangement the smallest State will have a chance of having its own representative some time or the other in the Federal Legislature, while the major States, on account of reservation of seats, will always be represented. Against this proposal, it has been urged that it would create a States block against the British Indian members in the Legislature. Let me assure those who have any misgivings on this point that nothing of the kind is contemplated. The States' representatives are likely to vote collectively only in cases where any encroachment on their sovereignty and internal autonomy as a body is involved in legislation under consideration; or where any of the three fundamental conditions are threatened to be violated; on other occasions they will be free to look after the particular interests that they have been entrusted with.

I am aware that our distinguished friend, Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, struck a note of warning that this confederation of States would create a super-State which might interfere with the internal affairs of individual Indian States. The position on this point does not appear to have been correctly understood. There is no intention at all of giving this body any powers or even functions beyond what I have described above. It will function as an Electoral College and act as a sort of buffer between the Federal Government and the Indian States, exercising its persuasive influence over the defaulting State's representative in the event of such a contingency arising, which I hold will be a very rare occurrence. This method and process by the States themselves would, I venture to maintain, be certainly more conducive to the smooth working of the constitution and far more preferable to direct interference by the Federal Executive. It is possible that misunderstanding may have arisen because of confusing this proposed body with the existing Chamber of Princes.

The advantages of the proviso that Federal laws should be applicable to the States after they have been passed as States' laws are obvious. In Federal matters the same laws will obtain throughout India; yet the States will keep their sovereignty in the eyes of their subjects. This is a matter to which the Rulers of States attach importance, and His Highness the Maharaja of Bikaner referred to this in some detail last year.

That leads me to item (*d*). The creation of a new all-India State with powers to legislate directly for all its units must necessarily involve double allegiance for the subjects of the States to that extent. The possibility of the Federal Legislature enacting laws which will automatically apply to the States' subjects, and the exercise of direct control by the Federal Government upon the States even in Federal matters will according to my proposal be eliminated.

My preference for a uni-cameral Legislature as against a bi-cameral one is based, *inter alia*, on the distinct advantages that it offers:—

(1) Of eliminating the possibility of a natural struggle for power between the two Chambers, of the kind that has arisen elsewhere; and

(2) Of minimising the difficulty that British India is experiencing on the question of agreement regarding the method of election and apportionment of seats among various communities and interests.

By the method of indirect representation of the various Provinces in the Federal House, the communal difficulty could be minimised, and I, for one, would not insist in that case on a 50 per cent. representation in a uni-cameral Legislature.

I might add here that if the proposal about having one House is not accepted, and it is decided to adopt a bi-cameral Legislature, the representatives of States in both the Chambers should be selected, elected or nominated, as the case may be, according to the forms of government prevailing in the respective States.

I now come to certain other features of federation between British India and the Indian States, as contemplated in my scheme.

Of the subjects administered centrally at present by the Government of India, some will have to be Federal or Central and others Reserved, at least during the period of transition. It should be definitely and clearly provided that the States' representatives will have nothing to do with legislation connected with, and bearing on, the administration of the Central subjects. Similarly, the British Indian representatives shall not be allowed to deal with matters other than those which will be expressly agreed upon to be Federal and specified in the constitution. The point has, I am glad to be able to say, been definitely and unequivocally stressed by all members of the Indian States Delegation, and His Highness the Nawab of Bhopal has repeatedly stated it in the Federal Structure Committee. I am, accordingly, definitely of the opinion that when legislation relating to Central subjects is under discussion, the States' representatives, not being directly interested, should not participate in the determination of those matters.

The Executive will, of course, be responsible to the Legislature, the responsibility of the entire Executive being collective. The Ministers selected from among the States' representatives should only hold the portfolios comprising Federal subjects. The Ministers in charge of what may be known as Reserved subjects during the transition period may be members of the Legislature and attend the meetings only for explaining the position of the Government with regard to their respective spheres. They will hold office during the pleasure of the Governor-General.

As it will be necessary to keep some subjects, not capable of being federalised or provincialised, as centrally administered sub-

jects, there is likely to be a considerable difficulty on the question of financing the administration of Federal subjects. These difficulties came into prominent discussion in the Federal Structure Committee, and though efforts have been made on all sides to come to an agreement as to the form of words that will determine the policy to be adopted in the matters, I am not quite sure that the States would be willing, and even able, to commit themselves to a definite undertaking in favour of federation without knowing what exactly their obligations in that behalf would be. According to my proposals, the difficulty could be solved in a practical manner; the administration of Federal subjects could be carried on with the allotment of funds from Central revenues as at present. The *status quo* could be maintained subject, of course, to the settlement of pending disputes, indirect taxation only being resorted to, so far as the States are concerned, even in the event of a deficit. The States would be willing to bear, as constituents of the Federation, their fair share of debts relating to Federal subjects. The first charge on Federal receipts will be the expenditure on account of Federal subjects, including payment of Federal debts, interest thereon, and expenditure on the Army and Foreign Relations. I contemplate, of course, the Federal Budget being separate from the Central Budget. In grave emergency such as war, the States would, as they have voluntarily done in the past, contribute towards the extraordinary expenditure according to their capacity and resources.

My State, for example, has never paid any tribute. The British Government bound itself by the Treaty of 1818, in consideration of the cessions of territory made by the then Maharaja Holkar, to support a field force to maintain the internal tranquillity of my State, and to defend it from foreign enemies. In 1865, by means of a monetary adjustment, the obligation to retain a force for service with the British troops was discharged, and my State was relieved in perpetuity of all demands for defence, pecuniary or of troops. Yet in times of war my State has always placed its resources freely at the disposal of the Crown; and it will continue to do so on similar occasions for the defence of the common Motherland.

With regard to the Federal Court, I am emphatically of the opinion that if a Supreme Court is established for British India, the Federal Court should be absolutely distinct from that Court. The functions that should be entrusted to the Federal Court were detailed by Sir Akbar Hydari in the Federal Structure Committee on the 23rd October, and I generally support those views, and further details no doubt will have to be carefully considered later on.

In addition to the Federal Court, I consider it necessary that provision should be made for the constitution of a Court of Arbitration for the settlement of disputes between the Crown and the Indian States, between a State or States and Provinces, *inter se*, or

between a State or States and Province or Provinces and the Central Government of British India.

Before I conclude, I shall make an appeal not only to the distinguished members present here, but also through them to the parties and interests that they represent. The Indian States have for long been, and are, repositories of all that was good in India, of ancient culture, oriental traditions and ideals. That much, I hope, will be conceded. I am ready to grant that from the point of view of administration there is room for reform in some States and necessity for reform in some others; but what I wish to emphasize is that the way to bring about reform wherever necessary in Indian States is not to force undiluted democracy on them. Democracy has its good points; but experience has shown that it is not an unmixed blessing. It has been tried in the West and I am not quite sure if opinion is entirely in its favour. We in India should therefore benefit by the experience gained elsewhere and model our future institutions with due regard to the traditions, sentiments and temperament of the people; institutions that they cannot make use of properly might do more harm than good. Though this is true of all India, it will apply with greater force to Indian States where the people have for ages lived happily under a benevolent monarchy, and where the personal element, the sense of a personal contact between the Ruler and the ruled, based on affectionate care on the one hand and devoted loyalty on the other, has played such an important part in creating an identity of interests between the Sovereign and the people. The people appreciate the value of something that is not only palpable, but is also endowed with feeling, and would far rather look up to that than to a machine for sympathy and solicitude. Once that feeling in the minds of the people is destroyed, there is no knowing where society will drift. It will just be a drift; and when the link that held the people together is missing, it would be difficult to regulate the direction or the pace of the drift. I admit that we are not perfect; many of us have still to do more, or to use the often-repeated terse phrase " set our house in order." Our duty is to work for the welfare of our people. In their happiness and contentment lies our prosperity and future well-being. With a thorough understanding between us and our people and the machinery of government working smoothly with the perfect co-operation that arises out of identity of interests, the Indian States can still prove to the world that it is possible to have a perfectly contented and well-governed State under a benevolent autocracy of our own kith and kin.

Well-governed States of the kind I contemplate, will, without the doubtful element of democracy, be a source of strength to the Federation of all-India. They will work as a steadying and sobering influence in case the events in British India tend, God forbid, to threaten the disruption of society. By their long experience in the art of governing, according to Eastern requirements, they will make contributions that appeal to the imagination of the people.

Their practical knowledge of military administration will be invaluable as the Army and Defence gradually come within the purview of the Federal Government. The States may have been conservative in outlook in the past, some of them may even now be a little behind the times, but they are all advancing; and it is my firm conviction that an advance under an indigenous form of rule and government will be far more conducive to the abiding prosperity of the people than one based on an imitation of the march of events in some foreign lands. There is, at present, a considerable amount of misunderstanding of the position of the governments in Indian States, but I can assure you that a great deal of it is based on want of reliable first hand knowledge of the real conditions. As the States come into closer association with British India, mutual understanding and goodwill must develop. British India will then realise the truth of what I claim to-day and will stand by these States instead of seeking to exterminate them. The States will prove the surest defence of India's great civilization, whether against aggression from without or disintegration from within.

Mr. Basu: We are coming to the close of our deliberations, but while the Conference has been at work there have been many expressions of opinion by important political groups in this country requiring that the Conference should be put to an end, or that in the alternative the Government should commence governing. It has not been made clear to us what is meant by that expression "governing."

(Here Mr. Ramsay MacDonald vacated the Chair, which was taken by Lord Sankey.)

If by "government" is meant taking legislative and administrative measures or putting an end to the agitation that is so widespread in India, that is a course of action that is not new. It is unfortunate that recent political history in India is not carefully studied in this country. For the last thirty years a great many legislative measures have been put on the Indian Statute book limiting the liberty of the subject, formulating procedure for the detention of men without trial, limiting the liberty of the press and so on. Those methods were tried for several years. What was the result? While fifty years ago disaffection with the present state of things extended to only a few thousands, such disaffection has spread more widely and has sunk more deeply, and has now spread to millions.

What is the alternative? This Conference has been engaged in trying to come to an agreement as to the future status and constitution of India. There has been a frank expression of views and there has been a general desire to trust each other. What I want to urge is that that spirit of trust should be the basis of our work. From the nature of the deliberations before the Federal Structure Committee it appears that doubts have been entertained, and that a spirit of trust has not played as great a part as it ought to have

played in those deliberations. It has probably been forgotten that the people of India had their own institutions. Many of you have heard of the village communities. When the British connection commenced, probably as always happens with alien rule, indigenous institutions were crippled and power was sought to be centralised; but there was always that basic Indian life when people assembled to manage their own affairs, and there is no reason why at the present day the people should not be trusted to manage their own affairs as they did in days past.

I am also sorry to notice in this country that there is not a full appreciation of the forces that now move Indian life. Sir Abdul Qaiyum told us this morning that the passion for self-rule not only dominates the people of British India, but has gone over the border, and the men of the Frontier Province also desire to have full self-rule. Well, the persistent desire for self-rule is not confined to any particular community in India; it animates the Hindu as well as the Muslim, as Mr. Fazl-ul-Huq patriotically admitted. In fact, the free air of the wide deserts of Arabia has breathed its love of self-rule into the life of India, and that desire constitutes one of the strongest forces in the composite life of India.

There are also other factors in Indian life which are overlooked. There is the great growth of Indian literature and of patriotic literature which moves the life of the people and moulds the life of the younger generation in India. That is not taken sufficient note of in this country. There are also movements for the advance of science and art—movements that have been recognised and appreciated all over the world, which also have not been taken sufficient note of. If all these factors are taken into account then the case for trusting the people becomes as strong as it can possibly be.

I now come to the Report of the Federal Structure Committee. As regards the adjustment of Provincial boundaries and the allocation of certain sources of revenue to the Centre and to the Provinces, I associate myself with the remarks that have fallen from Mr. Fazl-ul-Huq and Dr. Law. If the Statute fixes in a hard and fast manner the sources of revenue between the Centre and the Provinces, it may appear after the working of the constitution for a little time, that some Province finds it difficult to continue as a modern State with the resources placed at its disposal. There must, therefore, be some procedure in the constitution by which financial readjustments may be made where necessary; and for that purpose agreements may be entered into between the Centre and the particular State concerned.

In this connection reference has been made to the readjustment of boundaries. That is a question about which there are strong opinions in different parts of India. The people of several areas are not satisfied with being parts of certain Provinces to which they now belong; and for various other reasons it may be necessary to readjust the boundaries of the States according to the wishes of the inhabitants of those tracts. There should be some method by which

those wishes can be ascertained and the States constituted according to the ascertained views.

I will now come to the question of minorities.

It is a question beset with difficulties, but it is a question that cannot be shelved, and has to be solved. All sections of political opinion in India give due weight to a satisfactory solution of this question, and if a solution has not been arrived at it is due to a great extent to the large size of this Conference and also to the fact that the representatives of the communities when back in India have not put forth sufficient efforts for trying to arrive at a settlement there. But it should be remembered that because there is this difficulty about minorities we should not stay our hands as regards the broader issue—the general political advance of India.

Framers of constitutions, so far as I have been able to find out, according to my humble judgment, have never shied at obstacles or exaggerated difficulties. Difficulties there have always been, there are, and there will be. Those who have established or helped in the establishment of new States have grappled with those difficulties, and have shown that in practical working they do not count as being as important as they are made out to be. As regards the question between the communities in India, we have listened to very instructive and interesting speeches. Take the entire life of India. Consider what part these communal differences occupy amongst three hundred and fifty millions of people of various shades of opinion. There are one or two communal clashes, or riots, as they have been called, in the course of a year. Is that such a very large thing as to incline you to override the desires and wishes of a whole people—desires and wishes entertained by all communities and by all classes? Look also at another picture. Where there are these occasional clashes, side by side with them there are a thousand and one amicable contacts between the communities in matters just as important. I go to my friends, Mr. Fazl-ul-Huq and Mr. Ghuznavi, my Mussulman colleagues from my Province of Bengal, in matters of the greatest importance to me and to them, and they come to me.

There is no question of any communal difference in those cases. Why, because there are sometimes these unfortunate communal clashes and there are differences of religion, should the element of religious difference be introduced into the management of the affairs of the State? That is a proposition which I have not been able to understand or appreciate.

In making his remarks on this question, Mr. Fazl-ul-Huq made reference to a note which I had the honour to submit to the Prime Minister, as I was not a member of the Minorities Committee, and which the Prime Minister, at my request, circulated to the Delegates. Mr. Fazl-ul-Huq stated that in that note it appeared that I had said that in various districts in Bengal where Muslims were in a majority the local bodies, in the election of which there is no reservation of communal seats and no separate electorates, had had

a larger number of Muslims returned. What I stated precisely was that in localities where the land-owning classes, the traders and money-lenders are mostly Hindus, and the electors mostly Muslims, recent elections had shown that the majority of elected representatives on local bodies consisted of Muslims. I would request Mr. Fazl-ul-Huq and Mr. Ghuznavi to say for their own districts whether it is not a fact that in those districts the majority of the elected seats are held by Muslims and the majority of the voters are Muslims. The Hindus, however, do not make a grievance of it. In those districts where the Hindus are in a majority the reverse happens, and personally I fail to understand why, when in districts where the Muslims are in a majority, the Hindus do not grumble at there being a larger number of Muslim representatives on the local bodies, the Muslims, where they are in a minority—as Mr. Fazl-ul-Huq puts it, in a preponderating minority—should grumble because there is a larger number of Hindu representatives on the local bodies.

What is felt by the non-Muslim communities in Bengal is that if you have separate electorates on a religious basis, and if you reserve to a majority community a majority of the seats, then you practically place in the hands of the majority community political power for all time, political power which will have as its backing not the community in general but those of the community that profess one particular faith. The proposition that a majority community should have a reserved number of seats and separate electorates is in fact a new one, but it has been stated that probably the situation is unique. I do not find that it has been made out that the situation is as it is represented to be.

With regard to the Lucknow Pact, to which reference has been made by Mr. Fazl-ul-Huq, he has quoted certain remarks by Sir William Vincent. He forgets the Montagu-Chelmsford Report, in which it is clearly stated that it was an agreement which the Government had to accept, because it was a Pact agreed to by the two great communities after the most anxious and lengthy deliberations. They were then looking forward to an advance in the constitution of India. The claim had been put forward by a number of members of the Central Legislature and others. In view of the expected constitutional advance the two communities came together, put their heads together, and after a great deal of discussion in Calcutta and elsewhere, and finally at Lucknow, they arrived at an agreed settlement. The Government of India adopted the scheme. That it did adopt it is clear from the fact that the proportion that now prevails in the allocation of seats in the Legislature is based on that Pact. Mr. Fazl-ul-Huq also said that another of my statements was not correct, and that was that the existence of communal electorates has led to the constitution of communal parties in the Legislature. He and I both belong to the Legislature of Bengal. Mr. Fazl-ul-Huq belongs to the party which is known as the Praja Party. It has seats allocated to it in the Legislature. At the commencement there was one Hindu, or perhaps there were two

Hindus, as members of that party, but for a very long time there has been no Hindu there, and if you ever go and visit the Bengal Legislature you will find that the seats allocated for that party are occupied by Muslims only. I belong to a party which has a general name also—The People's Party—but it so happens that whether I look on either side or behind me all the faces that I see are Hindu faces. So in that way, though the names of the parties may not be communal, the fact is that they are communal, and when they consider matters in their party meetings the other communities, or representatives of the other communities, are not asked, and when communal matters are sometimes considered, the Muslim party, by whatever name you may call it, sends its representatives as Muslims and the other party sends its representatives as Hindus. That is the fact. So I do not think that I have tried to mislead any one by the statement that I put in my memorandum, and I think that Mr. Fazl-ul-Huq has not correctly appreciated what was stated in my memorandum.

Sir, as I have pointed out, the communal difference is there, but it is not predominant in our life. There are other factors in our life which are equally, if not more, predominant in which there is perfect amity between the two communities. Why should you close your eyes to those, and direct your attention only to where there are differences once in a year or so? That is what is being represented to you. You are closing your eyes to the facts of real Indian life, and I regret to say that we have not been properly served by the agencies that the press in this country has in India. Certain particular matters, when they relate to strife, are reported here, and strongly and widely reported, while other matters are not reported.

Sir, that is all I have to say with regard to the minorities. I will only say one word with regard to the question of Defence. I am not satisfied with the Report made as to Defence. For some reason or other we have lost the organisation for looking after our own homes; but I shall tell you the feelings of Indians in the matter.

During the Great War you withdrew nearly the whole of your standing Army and a very large part of military equipments in India were withdrawn from that country; and you left India to a great extent in the hands of a very limited number of untrained troops. India is vulnerable both landwards and seawards, and the feelings of Indians can very well be appreciated when they were in such a helpless condition. No doubt England has the responsibility of defending India, but the cry to defend the homes of our people seven thousand miles away from here is a very far cry and has not the same force as a cry nearer home. I hope that in framing the regulations as to defence the question of Indianisation and of transference of responsibility for defence will be so considered that the transfer and the Indianisation may be expedited as much as possible, and future military training should be in the hands of the Indian Legislature.

The Nawab of Chhitari: My Lord, I am speaking with a little disadvantage, because you are aware that the Muslim Delegates have decided to keep their views reserved on some points that were discussed in the Federal Structure Committee, and I do not think I am at liberty to express my views on those points even now unless and until we arrive at a communal settlement.

Although it is nearly a year since we left the shores of England after the last Session of the Round Table Conference, much water has flowed under the bridges in India; things have happened of such importance in India that they are bound to influence the result of our decisions here. Some of them were of advantage to us; others have presented us with great difficulties; but even those which present us with difficulty are useful inasmuch as they paint a true picture of the conditions and circumstances with which we have to deal.

The first point that I wish to mention is the settlement between Mahatma Gandhi and Lord Irwin which brought about peace in the country, and the subsequent decision of the Congress to send Mahatma Gandhi here as their delegate. We are very glad that that decision brought to the Round Table Conference persons like Mrs. Naidu, with her world-wide fame as a poetess, that most respected leader of India, Mahatma Gandhi, and Pandit M. Malaviya. Now we are all aware of their views also on the Indian question.

Then I wish to deal with the communal question. Attempts were made here last year and those attempts were renewed in India. Renewed attempts were made here; and it is with regret and shame I confess that we have failed to come to a complete agreement, even in spite of every effort made by the Prime Minister to help us. Our thanks are due to him for all his help. The misfortune is ours.

But unsuccessful as the efforts have been, I would beg to submit that they have been of great use in so far that they have narrowed down the points of difference. If we read the resolution of the All Parties Muslim Conference, together with the speech of Doctor Ansari at Haridpur, we find that there is complete agreement between every section of Muslims on all salient points except one, and that is the subject of joint electorates. Therefore all these points can be regarded as the joint demand of the whole Muslim community.

As to the question of separate electorates, my position is the same to-day as it was last year on the 1st January, when I spoke on the question in the Minorities sub-Committee, namely, that as certain communities insist on separate electorates it should be given to them. There should be a clause in the constitution that they can give them up whenever they like of their own free will. After all, separate electorates in themselves are not the goal. They are the means to achieve the goal. When all other safeguards for the Muslim community have been embodied, when they have seen the working of the constitution, when they realise that the real safety

of the minority rests upon the goodwill of the majority more than anything else, I think they will be willing to give up the separate electorates. What we want is to create a feeling of nationalism. Can we create a feeling of nationalism by enforcing upon certain communities a system of electorates against their wishes? My reply is in the emphatic negative. On the other hand, it will leave the community concerned morose and angry, and it will create in the minds of the majority a feeling that they have got a joint electorate not because of the willingness of the minority, but because the minority were too weak to retain it in their hands. If my proposal is adopted the result would be that it will give the Muslim community the right of self-determination, and when the Muslim community agrees to give up the separate electorates the result will be that their Hindu brothers will feel that they have given up the separate electorates to show their implicit confidence in the majority. For these reasons I still feel that it is the right way to start off with separate electorates with such a clause in the constitution.

We often hear about communal differences, and there is one point that I wish to make very clear, particularly to the members of His Majesty's Government, on whom the thankless task rests to decide. If we keep the Muslim demands on the one side, and the resolution of the Working Committee of the Congress on the other side, we shall find that the differences are not so many as they outwardly look. If we read the very lucid note that was circulated the other day by Sir Chimanlal Setalvad we shall find that the differences remain only in the Punjab and Bengal. On every other point there seems agreement between the two communities. Therefore, thankless as the task may seem, it is not such a tremendous task for the Government, and I hope they will be able to settle it once for all.

The other point which I wish to draw to the attention of members of the Cabinet is the rural agitation in India. The main cause for the agitation was economic, and therefore I do not wish to discuss the contributory causes, but certain phases of the agitation were such that they have caused a lot of alarm in the minds of those who hold property, at least in my Province. Only yesterday I received a telegram from the President of the British Indian Association, which is the biggest organisation of landlords, urging that it should be insisted that among the fundamental rights the right of property should also be included; and therefore I wholeheartedly support the recommendation of the Federal Structure Committee that this should be included in the fundamental rights of individuals.

I know that Mahatmaji himself is not against the right of individual proprietorship, and I should have loved to accept the formula put forward by him, but my difficulty is that that formula leaves so many loopholes that, if a party which did not believe in individual proprietorship ever came into power, they would be able to confiscate property very easily. Malviji does not seem to agree with this view of mine, and therefore I will refer to the first

sentence of the formula: "No existing interest legitimately acquired." The very words "legitimately acquired" throw the burden of proof on the owner of the property; he will have to prove whether the property was acquired by his forefathers, perhaps three hundred years ago, legitimately or otherwise, although the present law of the country is that possession is nine points of the law. It is not that one has only to prove at present that the present owner is not the lawful owner of the property; but one has also to prove before the court that so-and-so is the owner of the property. Instead of putting the burden of proof on the other side, however, this formula puts the whole burden of proof on the owner of the property. It is practically impossible for a man who traces the origin of his property to the Mogul Emperors to be able to prove now whether his great-grandfather obtained it in a legitimate way or otherwise. Similarly, there is another sentence: "shall not be interfered with except in accordance with the law applicable to such interest." Here again, if there is a party in power which does not believe in the right of private property, and they are a majority in the House, they can pass a law to-day and confiscate property to-morrow; it will be confiscated according to law. My point is that I do not wish in any way to interfere with the freedom of the future government if they wish to acquire land for public use. Certainly give them every facility to acquire land from any person if they wish it for public use, but with compensation. Compensation may be paid to the owner, and then any piece of land, any house, any village, any piece of ground may be acquired according to law and I will be quite satisfied.

Before I sit down, Sir, I wish to express my entire agreement with what has fallen from the lips of His Highness the Nawab of Bhopal. I think the solution of the Indian problem rests in all-India Federation, and I hope that it will be possible for you, Sir, to continue this work out in India so that you may be able to complete the full construction of an all-India Federation which I am sure will enable India to take her place with other free nations in the British Commonwealth on equal terms, and I hope that that will bind India to the British Commonwealth with such silken ties of love that they will be far stronger than any iron chain of domination. I am sure that Indian people are getting restless, and that it is necessary for the Government to try to satisfy them as soon as possible. I do not mean that we should be hurried into action by anything that is being done by young men thoughtlessly, but at the same time, if we really wish to remedy this morbid mentality, then the real remedy is that we should be able to create a public opinion in India so much against any action of violence that nobody may dare to do violence; and such a public opinion can only be created if there is a responsible Government in charge of law and order.

Raja Narendra Nath: I was not amongst the fourteen signatories who the other day submitted a representation requesting the British Government not to divorce Provincial autonomy from responsibility

at the Centre. There was probably no time to get the signatures of all the Delegates. I, however, give my wholehearted support to the prayer made therein. The problem of Provincial autonomy involves the solution of questions more difficult than that of responsibility at the Centre. It is more difficult to reconcile different communities than to work out an agreement amongst the Princes. The leaders amongst the former have to deal with the multitude. The Princes are statesmen and are better able to appreciate the value of compromise. Judging from the reports that have come to me, I notice that there are only two important questions so far as the Federal Legislature is concerned, the solution of which will take time: (i) the method by which the Indian States will come into the Federation, and (ii) Federal finance. For the solution of the communal tangle also some further enquiries will be necessary The communal question is closely connected with the question of the franchise, for which it is proposed to appoint a committee. It will be necessary to wait, not only for the determination of the franchise, but in some cases also for the preparation of the electoral rolls and the formation of the constituencies. Proceedings in connection with the Federal Legislature will not take a longer time.

I now wish to say a few words on the Reports of the Federal Structure Committee. I have not clearly understood what exactly are going to be the functions of the Federal Court in certain matters. There are differences of opinion in the Committee so far as the right to impugn or question the " constitutional validity " of a Provincial law is concerned.

I presume that a law transgressing the constitutional right of a citizen is not " constitutionally valid." I am personally of opinion that Provincial Courts—and better still a Provincial High Court—should have the right to entertain such a suit and an appeal may be allowed to the Federal or Supreme Court.

The subject dealt with in paragraph 39 of the Second Report of the Federal Structure Committee might have been more fully developed. The necessity of creating an authority for the purpose of co-ordinating the policy of different Provincial Governments, when uniformity of policy is needed in the interests of India as a whole, is obvious. Valuable suggestions on this point have been made in the Report of the Statutory Commission, paragraphs 184 and 185, Vol. II, and might be adopted. Such a co-ordinating Board would be necessary in view of the recommendation made in paragraph 12 of the Report of the Finance sub-Committee. The Provinces are apt to tinker with the subject of taxation, a process which ought to be avoided, and an advisory Financial Board will perform this useful function. The necessity of such co-ordinating Boards has recently been felt in Australia.

The question dealt with in the Report on Commercial Discrimination is not quite separate and distinct from the question of fundamental rights which came within the purview of the Minorities sub-Committee. I refer to paragraph 3 of last year's Report.

In the final speech delivered on the 19th January, the Prime Minister also alluded to the subject—page 484 of the Report of the Plenary Meetings. In view of those recommendations which apparently condemn discrimination in respect of all civic and economic rights and whilst the subject is still to be dealt with by an "experienced Parliamentary draftsman," I do not see why commercial discrimination has been the subject of a separate Report. There, however, appear to be some discrepancies in different parts of the Fourth Report. Paragraph 18 enumerates the rights, in respect of which discrimination is condemned. Paragraph 19 widens the scope of these rights as also of persons claiming them, while paragraph 22 again restricts the rights and the persons. I do not think it is intended to deprive any minority of the protection which this clause gives or to save from its operation an interest which a minority largely represents.

In this connection I would invite attention to various clauses which have been suggested by several members of the Delegation in their respective notes and memoranda, and also to the series of clauses which have been proposed in the so-called compromise signed by His Highness the Aga Khan, Sir Hubert Carr, Sir Henry Gidney, and Dr. Ambedkar, and reported at page 5 of the Second Report of the Minorities sub-Committee. If discrimination in respect of taxation, the holding of property, the carrying on of any trade, profession or business, and in respect of residence or travel, is to be interdicted, is such discrimination to be permitted in respect of admission to educational institutions? Mere executive instructions for laying open all schools to all classes, castes and creeds, have proved abortive; I wonder what Dr. Ambedkar has to say about it. Is it sufficient to condemn discrimination in the "holding of property"? Does such a phrase interdict such discriminatory laws as exist in Kenya against Indians and other Asiatic races? Is acquisition of property covered by the term "holding of property"? I would suggest to the "Parliamentary draftsman" that he should collate the various suggestions made by different Delegates representing different interests and given in the first and second Reports of the Minorities sub-Committee.

A few words on the report of the Minorities sub-Committee. I do not wish to repeat what I have said in my memorandum on the claim of the Hindu minority in the Punjab. I wish, however, to know on behalf of the Hindu minority whom I represent that, if the constitution does not immediately give them the right of voting for the election of the members who form the majority in the Council or the largest group, how long will this right be denied to them?

In the Punjab, two-thirds of the Council is so constituted that the remaining one-third representing the Hindu group has no voice in the election of two-thirds of the members. Is this right which the Hindus claim to be withheld as long as the majority wish to deprive them of it? Will that majority ever voluntarily give up that right? Does the declaration of 1906 constitute a pledge?—

though that pledge in respect of the Punjab was broken by the very persons who gave it. Has the pact of 1916 any binding force when all the parties who entered into the pact are dissatisfied with some of its aspects or other? To ask us to make another pact is, I am afraid, to evade the responsibility of deciding the question. The only solution is the one suggested by me in my memorandum.

The method of recruitment of the Public Services has been suggested in the pact entered into by some of the minorities. The recruitment is to be so made as to give a proper and an adequate share to all classes and communities. What this proper share is has to be determined by either the head of the executive or the members of the Public Services Commission who would be appointed by him. On behalf of the minority whom I represent I oppose this method for the following reasons. It would be difficult for the head of the executive in the future Government of India to disregard the wishes of the majority. A better plan to meet the claims of all classes will be to reserve for a transitional period a proportion for which such claims may be considered, and for the rest to declare that strict merit should be the sole criterion. There should have been unanimity on this point amongst all the minorities, but unfortunately this has not been the case.

There are special reasons why, on behalf of the minority I represent, I oppose the method. In the first place I must state frankly that the Hindu minority apprehends that it will not receive the same sympathetic treatment as the other minorities. Secondly, where spoon-feeding and reservation suits a majority community it becomes an irrevocable privilege. There can be no transitional period for it.

With regard to the quantum of reservation I have only to point out the practice followed by the Government of India in respect of appointments to the Imperial Services. One-third is reserved for redressing communal inequalities. However undesirable such a reservation may be on legitimate abstract grounds, I do not question the political expediency of such a policy, but then there is another side of the picture also. In the Punjab seventy to eighty per cent. of the young men who come out of the University belong to the minority groups. The occasions on which Government has to tell them that Government withholds from them the fruits of their labours must be reduced to a minimum. In European countries statesmen constantly ponder over the figures of the unemployed, but imagine how great is the unemployment amongst educated young men in our country. Till other avenues of employment are opened, government service is the only objective of our educated youths. I attribute the general unrest in India largely to unemployment.

Please do not think that I am attaching too much importance to Government service. Recruitment on the basis of caste and creed has a direct effect on the whole of our political outlook and mentality. If to display the communal and class label is conducive to a citizen's personal gain he will constantly do it and harp on it.

Adopt the formula for services proposed by my respected friend, Dr. Moonje, and the demand for separate electorates will cease within a short time. The sum and substance of my speech is to ask you to give us a constitution which at least paves the way towards nationalism and encourages us to approach that goal and not one that perpetuates class differences, and makes impossible even the eventual fulfilment of the pledge of 1917.

Mr. Jadhav: I am very much obliged to you, Sir, for giving me an opportunity of expressing my views on the first day of this Plenary Session. I had not the good fortune of being a member of any of the Committees this year, and I have had no occasion to urge the claims and air the grievances of the people whom I have the honour to represent. I have had the privilege of hearing my friend, Sir A. P. Patro, and I am in general agreement with him. He is a leading member of the Justice Party in Madras, and I belong to a party in Bombay which is working on the same principles of justice and fairness to all the communities. I also agree with Sir Cowasji Jehangir in what he has urged against commercial and administrative discrimination. I therefore do not think it necessary for me to go over the same ground again.

Just a year ago, at our first Plenary Session, I gave my views about federation with the Indian States. I then said:—

> "I was very agreeably surprised to hear from the speeches of the Princes that they are eager to come within the federation. I had not expected that that time would come so quickly. I had expected that the Indian Princes would like to form their own confederation and then to come into the general scheme after some years of experience. If they are already eager to join the general federation I would not like to stand in their way, although I think that perhaps it would be better for the Indian Princes to develop their own Indian Chamber of Princes, by forming a federation of their own."

That is what I said last year. I knew that some of the Indian Princes were holding somewhat similar views at that time, and others have since come forward to join their ranks. The number of those eager to join the Federation without delay and of those who would prefer to take more time to decide is almost equal, and in these circumstances I shall be excused if I dare to say that it may require some time yet before the full Federal constitution comes into existence and works efficiently. There are difficulties in the way, and many gaps have yet to be filled.

The Federal Structure Committee, Lord Chancellor, under your able Chairmanship, has worked very arduously, and has brought out important Reports which show that there is a considerable measure of agreement amongst the members of that Committee. The material thus collected is very valuable, and will give considerable help to those who are drafting the Government of India Amendment Bill. I hope and trust that that Bill will grant to India a Federal constitution. His Highness the Nawab Sahib of

Bhopal has stated his readiness to join the Federal scheme, and I know that some of the leading States are also anxious to join; but to take the unlikely and extreme case, if it was found that the Princes could not join at once, there should be power given to British India to work the new constitution even in their absence.

Sir A. P. Patro has urged the necessity of giving at least partial responsibility at the Centre, and has pointed out the dangers if Provincial autonomy only is given. Sir Cowasji has also addressed the Conference on that point. I am in agreement with them.

As stated last year, I represent the Hindu backward communities of the Presidency of Bombay, and especially the Mahrattas and allied castes. After the passing of the Government of India Act in 1919, a Franchise Committee was appointed to recommend what qualifications should be prescribed for different Provinces and peoples. The Indian members of that Committee knew the conditions of the urban people very well, but they had not much acquaintance with the conditions under which the agricultural masses and labour, both factory and field, were working. Their recommendations, therefore, gave a great advantage to the urban peoples over the rural. It was discovered, when the electoral rolls were ready, that the proportion of voters residing in municipal limits to the total population of those places was excessively higher than that of rural voters to the rural population. The special Committee that will be appointed now should be charged with the duty of correcting this injustice, and should take special care to see that both the field and factory labour is brought on the roll. This object cannot be achieved unless some of the members of the Committee are specially chosen from those who are conversant with the rural conditions.

In this connection I should like to say a few words about the Depressed Classes. The party to which I belong have consistently, during the last eleven years, supported their claims, and our sympathy for their uplift cannot be called into question. At present they are represented in the Council by members nominated by the Governor. They claim that their representatives should enter the Council by election. So far there is an agreement among all classes and sections. But the difference of opinion is acute as soon as the question of the electoral roll is raised. Some favour reserved seats in joint electorates and others advocate special electorates. On principle, the former system of joint electorates is very attractive. But when one examines its practicability one is confronted with great difficulties and I am myself convinced that to call upon the Depressed Class candidate to contest a joint electorate is to call upon a cripple to run a race with an athlete and will amount to denying them effective and real representation. The Government of Bombay have recommended for these classes separate electorates and I have been holding the same view for many years. I am authorised by the party I represent to state that they also support the claim of the Depressed Classes.

Another matter in which my people are interested is the Indianisation of the Army. In accordance with the recommendations of the Defence Committee of this Conference, an Expert Committee was appointed by the Government of India, and their Report has been placed in our hands. It is a pity that there is no opportunity for us to discuss the recommendations of the Committee, especially when that Committee has gone out of its way to express its opinion in opposition to that expressed by the Defence Committee with regard to the necessity of keeping Sandhurst and Woolwich open for Indian Cadets, in addition to the number of students that will be admitted into the Indian Military College to be started hereafter. I have drawn up a note on this subject which has been circulated to all members of this Conference, and I hope, Lord Chancellor, that it will be sent to the Government of India for their consideration.

I crave your indulgence to say a few words about another Report which has also been circulated among us. I mean the Report dealing with the financial ability of Sind to bear the strain of separation from Bombay. I have no desire to pass any remarks in favour of or against separation. The Report shows that the Government of Bombay have been spending over a crore of rupees (£750,000) a year on the administration and development of Sind in excess of the revenues obtained from that Province. Besides this, Bombay was incurring heavy capital liability on account of the Sukkur Barrage and other Irrigation schemes.

Here in this Conference, and especially in the Sind Committee. speeches were made charging the Government of Bombay with stepmotherly treatment of Sind. The report has exposed the hollowness of this charge and shows how ungrateful Sind has been to the mother, who is spending considerably more on Sind than her revenues warrant, at the cost of her own people. I trust that the representatives of Sind will acknowledge the debt they owe to the Presidency proper and withdraw the charge of stepmotherly treatment brought against the Government of Bombay.

Sirdar Jarmani Dass: Mr. Chairman, our discussions in both Sessions of this Conference have shown that federation will be the appropriate form of constitution for the whole of India. We have seen that the two Indias cannot remain isolated without prejudice to their welfare and that, if suitable safeguards prevent one part from encroaching on the legitimate rights of the other—safeguards that would preserve the sovereignty of the States and the prestige and personal dignity of the Rulers—both British India and Indian India may enter into federation with confidence.

The Maharaja of Kapurthala, whom I have the honour to represent, has signified his concurrence in the Federal scheme. The progressive ideas which His Highness brings to the rule of his State are well known. The institution more than ten years ago of a Legislative Assembly closely associated his subjects with his Government. It is widely hoped that in due course all Indian States will introduce constitutional forms of Government, so as to bring their systems into

line with responsible Government in British India, as far as may be practicable. I share that hope, being emphatically of the opinion that the welfare and prosperity of the whole of India will depend largely on the ruling Princes keeping this policy steadily in view.

Federation is an ideal accepted by all parties, and if there are differences of opinion among the Princes, it is not on the basic principle of federation, but on the method of selecting representatives to be sent to the Federal Legislature. The difference is that some Princes favour direct representation, and others indirect representation through an Electoral College.

A study of these schemes leads me to hold that a *via media* can be found, whereby both methods could be embodied in the new constitution. A most important question is, how to divide and distribute the seats that are to be allotted to the States. In my view, this cannot be done satisfactorily on the basis of population and salutes. Under the scheme Sir Akbar Hydari outlined in his speech on September 23rd in the Federal Structure Committee, if only 50 seats were given to the States, 24 would go to the 24 States whose Rulers have salutes of 21, 19 and 17 guns; one each to other States grouped in different Provinces and agencies. Of the surplus, Hyderabad would have five additional seats, and Mysore, Baroda, Gwalior, and Kashmir two each. Sir Akbar mentioned distribution on these lines in a merely illustrative sense, but I assert that if his scheme is adopted, federation is doomed. It must not be forgotten that salutes are not the real criterion of the importance of States. The majority of the Sovereign States will remain out of federation if proper representation is not given to them, and this will mean the wreck of the Federal Constitution.

The inclusion of the majority of Sovereign States is of the utmost importance for consolidating the constitution. Just imagine the weakness of the edifice of federation if only one seat were given to all the Punjab States (excluding Patiala and Bahawalpur) comprising, among others, martial Sikh States like Nabha, Jind and Kapurthala, whose contributions to defence have been so vital to the safety of the Indian Empire, situated as they are in the Punjab, on the borders of Afghan territory. Important Mussulman States like Rampur and Junagarh, and Hindu States like Alwar, Bhavnagar, Nawanagar, and Dholpur, would also be excluded. Under such conditions federation will stand on weak pillars and will not bear the onslaught of any storm. Besides, it will be exceedingly difficult, however impartial the proposed Committee of allocation may be, to give a just and equitable representation to the States. I beg to submit, therefore, that the procedure adopted in the constitution of the Chamber of Princes, which was inaugurated by Royal Proclamation on February 8th, 1921, may with advantage be followed for the selection of representatives of these Princes for the Upper Chamber of the Federal Legislature. We all know the importance attached by the Indian public to Queen Victoria's Proclamation of 1858. It is most important that the Proclamation of our present Gracious Sovereign, issued little more than ten years ago,

should be the guide in this cognate matter of the Princes, whose relations are, not with the British Parliament, but with the Crown. There are also other reasons why the system which has worked satisfactorily for the whole body of Princes since 1921 should not be departed from, in order to introduce a new principle that is certain to create jealousy, heart-burning and suspicion, which we are all anxious to avoid. I would suggest that, as provided in the constitution of the Chamber, one seat each should be given to all the ruling Princes who are members of the Chamber at present. If the 121 States are each given a seat in the Upper House, the claims of all the States will be met without giving any legitimate cause for grievance to the major States. The latter will have a considerable number of representatives in the Lower House on the population basis, since both Chambers are to have co-ordinate powers; the greater States will not have cause to grumble, as they will always have a strong position in the Legislature. Hyderabad, for instance, with its population of about 13,000,000, will have 14 members, one in the Upper and 13 in the Lower House. States with a population of one million will have only two members; one in each House. I submit that the Upper House should be enlarged in order to accommodate the 121 members from Indian States. On a fifty-fifty basis, the Upper House would then number 242, while on a 40 per cent. basis it would be just over 300. This is not a large number compared with the Japanese House of Peers, which has 399 members; and the British House of Lords is very much larger.

That distinguished leader, Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, on September 15th, said, "It is for Their Highnesses to decide what is the minimum number which will meet with their requirements, and then we will discuss the question of proportion between British India and Indian States." From his remarks and those of other leaders of British India it would seem there should be no difficulty in British Indians agreeing to make the House a little larger to meet the needs of the States. The weightage given in the Upper House over the population percentage of the States should be used in the interest of the medium and smaller States. I am not thinking in this connection of the State I represent. Kapurthala will have direct representation in any event on account of its historical importance, its contribution to the defence of the country and for imperial purposes in the Afghan Wars and the Great War. It is also assured of representation from the point of view of salutes and the full sovereignty it has enjoyed for some centuries. In the interest of the Princes as a body, we cannot allow these States enjoying full sovereignty to be treated in any inferior manner to those who enjoy the same rights although they are more thickly populated and their areas are larger. The equality of status among Sovereign States is implicit in the constitution of the League of Nations, where powerful countries such as England and France have the same representation as Uruguay and Paraguay in South America. As for the Lower House, I agree that the States' representatives should be on the basis of population. I urge that States'

representatives should be chosen by the Rulers from the members of the Legislative Councils of their States.

I take this opportunity to express my firm conviction that the communal trouble in India which, unfortunately, is making its appearance also in some of the States, is transitory and artificial. Once confidence is restored and all suspicion removed, factors of community, caste, and creed will take only a secondary place in the political life of the country. This is the spirit of the younger generation to-day; as on them will rest soon the responsibility of working and developing the new Constitution, one can look to the future for a united and happy India without any misgiving and, indeed, with confidence.

I take this opportunity to express my profound appreciation of the great work of the Prime Minister and other Ministers in helping the Conference. History will record that the intentions of the British Government *vis-à-vis* India have been sincere. When we go home and reflect on all that has happened we shall recognise how many times during these Sessions we have had proofs of the sincerity of their affection for our country. They are as anxious as we are to lead India to the goal of a self-governing country as a co-equal partner in the Commonwealth of the British Empire. The friendship cultivated by association for over a century and a half should be used further to strengthen the ties between England and India by which the attachment between the two peoples will become unbreakable.

I am irresistably reminded of a noble precept from Shakespeare which applies equally to India and to England:—

> " Those friends thou hast, and their adoption tried
> Grapple them to thy soul with hooks of steel."

Mr. Barooah: This time, we meet in this historic hall, under different circumstances. When we met here a year ago we were looked down upon and ridiculed by many of our people at home. They thought that we were going on a fool's errand. But towards the end of the last Session of the Conference, the circumstances changed, and people in India began to look up to this Conference with hopes, which they had refused to entertain before. I should also say that the whole world is watching this unprecedented meeting of the East and the West, with the greatest interest.

What India demands to-day is the legitimate birthright of one-fifth of the whole human race. It is the British Government which is primarily responsible for this demand, and it is the British Government again which can either grant or refuse it to-day; and in either case, Sir, I leave it to you to think, what will be the effect, not only in my country, but also in yours, as well as in the rest of the Empire. It ought to be regarded as a matter of great glory to England, that under her tutorship, the vast millions of India, the ancient land of light and civilisation, have joined to-day in one voice, in demanding equal partnership with the people of the British Empire and a place of honour among them.

I know that we have not solved our communal problems. I do not wonder. At this turning point in our history, it is but natural for every community to be anxious to safeguard its own rights. But it is significant that whatever differences there may be among us in this respect, the entire Indian Delegation is unanimous in one matter. The Princes and the people, Hindus and Muhammadans, Sikhs and Christians, have in one voice put forward their united demand before the British Parliament and the British people that India should be as much independent as any of the other Dominions in the Empire, and that she should acquire that status without unnecessary delay. You must have also observed that the points on which we still happen to disagree are much fewer than those on which we have agreed; and that our differences have been narrowed down to such an extent that they may now be left to the sagacity and sense of fairness of British statesmanship for satisfactory settlement.

Dominion Status was promised to India; and it is Dominion Status that India demands to-day. I can conceive of no Dominion Status for India, without responsible government at the Centre and without control over the Army, the Purse and the Foreign Affairs, to the full extent to which they are enjoyed in the other Dominions in the Empire. I do not forget that in some of these departments, safeguards are necessary for the period of transition; but none of us is afraid on this account. We are agreeable to all just and proper safeguards. I, therefore, beg to submit that the Government will not now be justified in telling us that inasmuch as we have failed to come to a complete settlement of our communal differences we must return to India with Provincial autonomy alone. We were brought here not to settle our communal differences. That could be done better in India than here. We were brought here to assist you, in our humble way, by free and frank discussion with you, to hammer out an honourable constitution for our country, on the line of the Dominions, in spite of all our communal differences. The Government were not unaware of our communal differences, when they made the promise of Dominion Status for India and when they asked us to come here to assist them to arrive at the greatest common measure of agreement for the same; nor did they make the settlement of communal differences a condition precedent to the attainment of Dominion Status. It is therefore not open to the Government now to say that Dominion Status cannot be given to India, because the Indian communities have not yet been able to bring about a complete settlement of all their differences. In fact, these differences have already been considerably removed and what still remains, can be easily adjusted by the able statesmen of this country, without doing the least substantial injustice to any of the communities concerned, provided only that these statesmen face the situation with sincerity, sympathy and boldness. It is only in respect of Bengal and the Punjab that there are some real difficulties; and I venture to appeal to you, Sir, as head of the National Government, to take this matter into your own hands, deal with it in the spirit of a wise head of a coparcenary family, and by per-

suading some and overruling others of the members of our Indian household settle it in a manner conducive to the best interests in the long run of all.

The percentage of representation of a particular community on the representative bodies of a country always depends upon its numerical strength as well as upon other considerations, such as the general importance of the community, and inasmuch as these are always changing factors, the representation also must require change and adjustment from time to time. For these reasons, any formula that may now be adopted for the representation of our various communities on our legislative bodies cannot stand good for ever. It will have to be often reconsidered and readjusted in the future. I do not in the least attempt to minimise the great importance of adequate representation of our different communities to safeguard their own interests. But I would impress upon all communities that at this stage of our political advancement the attainment of self-government for India is of far greater importance than anything else. When we achieve this, there will be ample time and opportunities for any readjustment in the matter of representation. You will excuse me, Sir, if I tell you that we are perhaps proceeding on the wrong line. A nation acquires independence first and settles its communal differences afterwards.

It must be remembered that a constitution requires much modification and improvement, after being once built up. No constitution has ever been complete and quite satisfactory and faultless from its very birth. Your own constitution was not as glorious as it is to-day when it was first introduced. Our present differences, therefore, should not stand in the way of a popular constitution for our country. Satisfy the discontented millions of India, by at once giving her a modern constitution, and the required improvements will come of themselves later on.

The Indian Round Table Conference, far from being a failure as some people would want the world to believe, has been a great success. It has proved, beyond the shadow of a doubt, that India is not only united but also earnest in her demand for complete self-government. If the communities have differed, they have differed only in matters of details and not in the main and fundamental principles. Their anxieties to protect their own interests do not indicate, in the least, their hostility to the national cause, but prove most unmistakably their keenness to ensure the stability and smooth running of the future self-governing machinery for India. Well, Sir, these are very valuable materials to build up Dominion Status for my country.

This Round Table Conference is a great turning point in the history of British connection with India. It has afforded a unique opportunity of binding up with the Empire one of the greatest countries of the world, with ties of lasting affection, friendship and goodwill, so essential for the welfare and the prosperity of the entire British League of Nations. Here around this table, on this

memorable occasion, are assembled the representatives of all the different communities, classes, creeds and schools of political thought in that vast country, every one of whom is willing, with a full heart, to co-operate with you, the representatives of the British political parties, for the common good of the whole British Empire. Such an opportunity did not occur during the last two centuries of British rule in India and will perhaps take many many years to occur again. I entreat you most earnestly—do not lose this great opportunity; communal differences we no doubt have; but do not make much of them; you can help us to unite, in spite of these differences; help us to rise to the honourable position of your other Dominions; and give us peace and contentment. A contented India will be a source of infinitely greater strength and pride to England; but a discontented India, feeling a sense of humiliation, as she feels to-day, is bound to be a burden of ever-increasing troubles to you and will not be worth possessing at all.

The air is thick with the rumours that this Conference will end in a declaration of Provincial autonomy, for the present, coupled with an assurance that the promise of responsibility in the Centre will stand good for the future. Such a procedure is calculated to do immense harm. In spite of this pious assurance, it will not pacify India; it is sure to alienate the sympathy even of that small section of Indian politicians that has stood by the side of the Government, up till now. I therefore once again appeal to you, Sir, and to all those, who are concerned in this matter—let it not be said, when this Conference is over, that British statesmanship failed to grasp the Indian situation, or to read the signs of the times and to rise to the full height of the occasion.

The matter of responsibility at the Centre is no longer a difficult matter. After the pronouncements made last Thursday, in the Federal Structure Committee, by Mr. Jinnah, Sir Muhammad Shafi and Sardar Ujjal Singh, it is now only a question of providing adequate safeguards, to protect the minorities; and to this, none of the Indian Delegates will ever object.

These are my general observations. I have submitted a separate note on a few points that vitaly concern my own Province. It refers chiefly to the matter of representation and territorial redistribution and the treatment of the hill areas in Assam. I hope that it may be treated as a part of this speech.

In addition to what is contained in that note, I beg to mention only one more matter. The proposed allotment of seats on the Central Legislatures by the Sankey Committee for the Province of Assam is regarded as inadequate. The Committee, while holding that for the Upper Chamber, " the guiding principle should be a reasonable approximation to equality of representation for each unit ", also observe very rightly that " absolute equality, having regard to the great variation in size and population between the Provinces, would obviously be inequitable ". I entirely agree with these views; but I beg respectfully to point out that in suggesting

only five seats for Assam in the Upper Chamber of the Indian Legislature, none of these principles have been strictly followed.

As for determining the representation of a Province in the Lower Chamber, the Committee very wisely took the view that it is not only the population of a Province, but also its importance in other respects that should be taken into consideration. But in allotting no more than seven members to represent the Province in the popular House of the future Parliament of India, I feel, Sir, that the present position of Assam as a great centre of tea, coal and oil and her ever-increasing industries have not met with adequate consideration.

I have received a cable from the " Assam Association ", a political body of great importance in my Province, to put in my objection to these allotments and I request that my objection may be noted and considered.

Raja of Bobbili: Lord Chancellor, I am exceedingly thankful to you, Sir, for allowing me an opportunity of placing before this Conference the views of the Landholders of India whom I have the honour to represent on this Conference. I do not share the view held by some Delegates that speeches at this stage are of little value, particularly because the representatives of Landholders have had no other occasion of acquainting their fellow-Delegates, both British and Indian, of some of the vital issues which concern them. I trust that the Conference, and those that will have ultimately to draft the constitution, will give their best consideration to the case of the Landholders.

Sir, I understand that the Reports presented to the Plenary Session both on the last occasion and on this, are open for discussion at this stage; and therefore I propose to deal very briefly with some of the issues which arise out of the Franchise, the Minorities, and the Provincial Constitution Reports, and finally of the Federal Structure Committee's Report so far as it concerns the Landholders.

Now I desire to submit that the Zamindars, holding a large stake in the country, and to a certain extent conservative by tradition and instinct, have no desire to arrest progress or to thwart the legitimate ambitions of their countrymen. They are a part of the nation and are bound to take note of the surging tide of nationalism and the unanimous desire for Dominion Status for India. But they will be false to their principles and untrue to their order if they do not desire to preserve the inherited rights of their class, and secure legitimate guarantees in the new order of things.

In the first place, the Zamindars claim that they should have special representation in the Legislature, Provincial and Central, as hitherto, and urge respectfully that this representation is more necessary now than hitherto.

Secondly, realising that no reasonable amount of special representation can by itself be an adequate safeguard, they urge that in all Provinces there should be established bi-cameral Legislatures,

the Upper House having a steadying influence on the occasional impetuosity of the popular Chamber.

Lastly, in view of the sanctity which they attach to the agreements entered into with them, and the sanads granted to them by the Paramount Power, they urge for the inclusion in the fundamental rights of a clause securing inviolability of the terms of such agreements and sanads.

Indeed, the memoranda that have been circulated to the Delegates of this Conference by the Maharajah of Darbhanga and myself make it unnecessary for me to deal at any great length with some of these issues.

With regard to special representation, in our first memorandum, which I trust will form part of the record of this Conference, we have explained the need for special representation for Landlords in Provincial Legislatures. It is a matter for regret that both the Franchise sub-Committee and the Provincial Constitution sub-Committee did not deal with this question. I must, however, express my gratitude to the Federal Structure sub-Committee for its unanimous recommendation that Landholders should have special representation, preferably in both Houses of the Federal Legislature, and certainly in the Lower. I venture to submit respectfully that the need for such special representation is even greater in the Provinces where Legislatures may have to deal with questions which more directly and vitally concern them. As we have pointed out in our memorandum, every Provincial Government has recommended such special representation. The Government of India has strongly endorsed the views of Local Governments in this behalf. And both on the strength of the Reports of the Provincial Committees which collaborated with the Indian Statutory Commission, and on other evidence, it can be asserted that non-official Indian opinion has generally been in favour of such representation. In this connection I cannot do better than quote the views of the Government of India expressed in its Despatch:—

> "We have ourselves no hesitation in holding that this form of special representation should continue. The success in general constituencies of persons possessing the special Landlord qualification can rightly be regarded as a healthy sign of a greater readiness on the part of a conservative class to recognise their obligations, and take up political responsibilities under an increasingly popular system of government. But prejudices still survive, and, unless special constituencies are retained, many leaders of this important class may still be unwilling to expose themselves to the hazards of election by general constituencies, and *those Landholders who are elected by general constituencies may prove to be unrepresentative of the landholding interest.* Such questions as tenancy and land revenue measures can be expected to occupy more prominently the attention of the Provincial Legislatures in the near future, and in the controversies likely to ensue, the Landlords can reasonable claim that they

> should not be deprived of their special representation at a time when the extension of the franchise may well increase the difficulty of their securing representation on a general register."

And further the Government of India conclude their final and considered recommendation in the following unmistakable terms:—

> "On the broad issue whether or not there should be special constituencies for the representation of the great Landholders, we have no hesitation in accepting the view of the Indian Central Committee and of the Provincial Governments, that they should be retained both in the Central and in the Provincial Legislatures."

I must therefore conclude, Sir, that no constitution for the establishment of Provincial Legislatures will fail to take note of the need for special representation being given to Landholders.

With regard to Second Chambers, another question in which we are interested is the proposal for the establishment of a bi-cameral system of Legislature in the Provinces. I note that the Provincial sub-Committee has by a large majority recommended the proposal unconditionally for some Provinces and conditionally for others. In so far as those Provinces for which such a system has been recommended—namely, Bengal, United Provinces, and Bihar and Orissa, we welcome and endorse the proposal, but we are not satisfied with the state at which the problem has been left in regard to the other Provinces. The establishment of Second Chambers is so fundamental an issue, not merely in regard to vested rights and interests, but even to the proper working of the constitution, that no one can contemplate with equanimity a differential treatment of the Provinces in this respect. It is inconceivable that at the threshhold of a new era of great constitutional reforms the affairs of vast provincial areas and populations should be left to the untrammelled control of a single Chamber. The check for over-hasty or panicky legislation must be found from within, and cannot either effectively or for long be imposed from without with such expediences as powers of veto. Sir, I venture to think that the recommendation of the Provincial sub-Committee would have been modified so as to be applicable to all Provinces if it had before it the picture of the constitution proposed for all India. The expedience of the scheme of an all-India Federation resulted in an appreciation of the position of the Provinces which will, if not immediately, certainly within a short time, approximate to sovereign States. It is, therefore, imperative that in the new constitution every Province must have bi-cameral Legislature, the Upper House acting as a wholesome restraint on the Lower.

Sir, I have referred to the Minorities sub-Committee and its Report. It is regrettable that in the preoccupations of that Committee over the communal issue other vital matters such as those affecting various interests and the question of fundamental rights have not even been discussed. I am, therefore, constrained to refer

in some detail to one of such vital issues concerning Landlords. I desire it to be clearly understood that I am speaking on behalf of that group of Landlords who are holders of permanently settled estates.

I shall not weary the Committee by tracing the history or describing the genesis of some of these estates—some of which are so vast as to be larger both in size and importance than the territories of many a ruling Chief of India. I shall only content myself by stating what is an undoubted fact, that the ancestors of many of these estates were Rulers with full sovereign powers, and that they gave up their sovereign powers under specific agreements and mutually binding covenants.

It is unnecessary to go into the history of the Permanent Settlement, but I may be permitted to quote just two articles from that historic document which Lord Cornwallis was responsible for, so far as Bengal is concerned. In the Proclamation which the Marquis issued under the authority of the Board of Directors in 1793 it is stated:—

> "The Marquis Cornwallis now notifies to all Zamindars, independent Talookdars and other actual proprietors of land in the Provinces of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa, that he has been empowered by the Honourable Court of Directors for the affairs of the East India Company to declare the jumma which has been or may be assessed upon their lands under the regulations above mentioned, *fixed for ever.*" (Article II.)

Article III of the Proclamation further states:—

> "The Governor-General in Council accordingly declares to the Zamindars, independent Talookdars and other actual proprietors of land, with or on behalf of whom a settlement has been concluded under the regulations above mentioned that at the expiration of the term of the settlement no alteration will be made in the assessment which they have respectively engaged to pay, but that they and their heirs and lawful successors will be allowed *to hold their estates at such assessment for ever.*"

These conditions and assurances are not exceptional for the landholders of the Provinces mentioned herein, but they are applicable generally to all permanently settled estates. In fact, the following clause appears in the sanad granted to every landholder of a permanently settled estate in the Madras Presidency:—

> "The British Government resolved to grant to Zamindars and other landholders, their heirs and successors, a permanent property in their land in all time to come; to fix for ever a moderate assessment of public revenue on such lands which shall never be liable to change under any circumstances; to institute Courts of judicature for the protection of these valuable rights."

Sir, I plead that these obligations should be carried over to the new constitution and that the new Government should be bound by these obligations entered into by the old. I ask for an incorporation in the fundamental rights of a clause which will prevent in any manner the whittling down or impairing of these rights. We desire that the terms of the settlement should not be altered in any manner. We desire that no expropriatory legislation of any kind should be permitted which will either deprive us of any portion of our estates or lessen the value of such estates except on payment of just compensation adjudicated upon by competent tribunals. Sir, it would under normal circumstances have been unnecessary for me to press this claim for safeguarding lawfully acquired existing rights of the landholders. But the trend of certain agitation in India, confined though it has been to a small section, has created a feeling of profound uneasiness among the class which I represent. Nor have our apprehensions and anxieties been diminished by listening to the speech which Mahatma Gandhi made at a meeting of the Federal Structure Committee in discussing British commercial rights. We have heard with alarm the proposal seriously put forward that titles to property will be subject to examination and audit by the new Government, not according to any well-defind law but according to a mysterious process which recognises only that which is " legitimate " and " in the best interests of the nation ". We feel that to mix up moral ideas with legal ideas would result in doing injustice both to moral conceptions and legal ideas. Sir, I do not desire to dilate on this aspect of the case and will only say that such a proposal can never be accepted by the landholders.

We desire that all the covenants and obligations which the present Government have entered into with us must be carried over to the new regime, and accepted by the new Government. Nor is this proposal a new or revolutionary one. Such was exactly the arrangement when the Crown took over the administration from the East India Company. By Section 67 of the Government of India Act of 1858 it was enacted that " All treaties made by the said Company shall be binding on Her Majesty, and all contracts, covenants, liabilities and engagements of the said Company made, incurred or entered into before the commencement of this Act may be enforced by or against the Secretary of State in Council in like manner and in the same courts as they might have been by and against the said Company if this Act had not been passed ". This section has been repeated in subsequent enactments and is reproduced as Section 132 in the latest Government of India Act of 1919. We strongly urge for a similar section forming part of any new constitutional statute for India. The effect of such a provision will be that if on a proper interpretation of the contract between the East India Company and the Landholders under various sanads and agreements and understandings the Government was precluded from increasing the burdens on or impairing the value of their estates, future Legislatures, Central or Provincial, and future Executives will be under the same bar. I submit this is neither an unreasonable nor an extravagant claim.

Sir, I have circulated a memorandum on the constitution of an Andhra Province which has been the subject of agitation for many years and which is now an urgent necessity. While I have no desire to side-track the work of this Conference or to delay the passing of any constitutional Act of Parliament, I am equally clear in my mind that the formation of an Andhra Province cannot be long postponed. I suggest that the constitution should provide for the division of a federating unit so as to facilitate the formation of Provinces based on linguistic affinity and that in the meanwhile the Government of India should take steps preparatory to the constitution of an Andhra Province.

Sir, I have only one other aspect of the work of this Conference to touch upon before I close my remarks. I am one of those who do not feel that the Conference has failed to achieve what it set out to do. It has certainly settled the broad outlines of the constitution and has put before us the bold scheme of an all-India Federation, which alone will solve the many difficulties connected with constitutional advance. It is perfectly true that a solution of the minorities problem has not been arrived at, but I shall not be too tragic over its failure—I am aware, Sir, that a large body of Delegates, even at this eleventh hour, are willing to come to a settlement and will not question any solution that you may propose. But unanimity is impossible in this as in any other question—and indeed must be more so in this than in other questions. Speaking on behalf of the Landholders of the Madras Presidency, and if I may, for the Justice Party of which I happen to be a member both in the Legislature and outside, I should like to take this opportunity of stating that we are emphatically of opinion that special representation should be given to the untouchable classes. Not merely justice and expediency, but the very needs of democracy as well as social reform, require the guaranteeing of a certain number of members of these classes being elected to the Legislatures, and we can conceive of no other method, than that of special representation for securing that end. I should like to add that both my class and my party also endorse the claim for special representation of Europeans, Anglo-Indians and Indian Christians, and we very much regret that there should have been any voices raised against such claims. Sir, the vast majority of my countrymen, particularly the younger section, are tired of continual bickerings over the representation in councils of the various communities, and I want to give your Government this assurance, that provided the advance in constitution is satisfactory and as visualised at the last Session of the Conference, any decision by the Government on the communal issue, in the absence of an agreement, will be not merely accepted but warmly welcomed by the vast majority of the people, and the country will settle down to a peaceful era of progress.

Sir, one word more and I have done. During the last days of the Federal Structure Committee I have watched with interest the discussion on the issue whether Provincial autonomy must precede

Central responsibility or must coincide with it. Some have suggested that it will take at least three years to complete the necessary steps before an all-India Federation can be established, that it would be unreasonable to keep India so long under the present constitution, and that therefore Provincial autonomy may be introduced as soon as possible. Others have suggested that this proposal may postpone indefinitely the question of responsibility at the Centre, and have therefore urged simultaneous advance both at the Centre and in the Provinces. I may be pardoned for the reflection that much may be said on both sides. I agree with those who believe that if Parliament will pass merely a Bill for Provincial autonomy it would create such suspicion that the Provincial constitutions will not have a fair chance of success. It would also be unreasonable to ask Provincial Ministers, however responsible they may be, to shoulder the burden of suppressing an agitation for responsibility at the Centre, an agitation which is in no way due to any act of the Provincial administration, and the justification for which they cannot really question under such circumstances.

I feel therefore that Provincial autonomy and the establishment of a responsible all-India federation must more or less coincide and that there can be no satisfactory transitional arrangement of a British-India Federation.

I should like to remind the Conference that it has proceeded all along on the basis of an all-India Federation and that important interests have agreed to responsibility at the Centre on that basis. I feel that the interposition of a British-India Federation, though for a transitional period, will necessarily lead to the reservation of many more subjects than at present contemplated, and what is a far greater danger, will inevitably prevent the formation of an all-India Federation, thus converting the transitional stage into a permanent state of immobility. On the other hand it is no good questioning the *bonâ fides* of those who state that three years may elapse before the Federation can come into existence. I feel, Sir, that a middle course is possible which may meet both view points, and I commend it for the earnest consideration of the Government. It is undeniable that even according to the proposals of the Federal Structure Committee, Provincial legislatures must come into existence before the Federal legislatures, so that the Upper Federal Chamber may be constituted out of them. What is really apprehended is that after passing a Bill for Provincial autonomy Parliament may rest on its oars and not proceed further. These apprehensions will be removed if a composite Bill for the establishment of Provincial autonomy and the inauguration of a Federation for All-India is passed by Parliament. One portion of the Act so passed may come into operation earlier than another part, a definite date being, however, fixed for the coming into operation of the second part. During the interval the work of completion of the picture may be carried out, the proposals emerging from such work, by means of negotiations, being embodied in statutory rules which may be laid before Parliament from time to time for ratification. It is obvious that all the details cannot be embodied in the Act

and must be the subject of legislation by statutory rules as indeed was the case in 1919. I venture respectfully to put forward this suggestion for the consideration of the Government and Conference, I beg to apologise for the time I have taken and to thank you once more for the valuable opportunity given to me.

Sir Hubert Carr: Lord Chancellor, during the past week or ten days we have heard a good deal regarding the alleged failure of the Conference, and I am glad to have this opportunity to express the view of my colleagues and myself, which is very emphatically opposed to that description. We feel that the deliberations extending over the past year have led to a very remarkable degree of agreement on many questions of vital importance to the future of India. In holding this view, we do not shut our eyes to the difficulties which still exist, but we have a keen recollection of the great difficulties which faced this Conference when it first assembled last year.

Our community takes, perhaps, a more severely practical view of the problems confronting them, and consequently, although at one with many of the Delegates in visualising India's future as an autonomous unit, we are perhaps liable to attach greater attention to the practical difficulties in the road. We feel very strongly that not only, as has been said by many speakers, will the finest constitution in the world fail to operate satisfactorily without goodwill, but also it will fail to act unless it has a sound, practical basis. It is security of life and of property for every person within the borders of federated India which will be the final criterion on which the constitution of India will be judged. That general principle has influenced our attitude in the many discussions on the various subjects in which it has been our privilege to take part, and it will continue to be our general principle in assisting the development and application of constitutional reforms. Granted, such a policy has not as its basis the achievement of the highest speed, but because it is tempered with a keen appreciation of Indian political feeling we do believe that it is calculated to achieve the highest speed which is compatible with reasonable safety. Were nothing to result from this Conference other than the increased understanding and respect which Delegates have found for each other, the gain would be considerable. This closer relationship enables all parties to give voice, without fear of misunderstanding, to their genuine thoughts, and permits the advocacy of lines of action in the knowledge that they will be judged in the spirit in which they are put forward. It is in this atmosphere that the European section of the British Indian Delegation stands firmly for such financial safeguards as will enable India to preserve her credit, and we do so without fear of being suspected of wanting to hold India back from her natural constitutional progress. We take that position because we know that India, if she depreciates her credit, will be hampered in all her future efforts at political, economic, or social development. It is in this atmosphere that we insist upon separate electorates for electing our representatives for the legislatures, while we wish to play our part and make our contribution to the public life of India.

We urge this course not only for ourselves but for those minorities who demand it, not in order to hamper the unification of India, but because we verily believe it is a necessary step in securing true representation, and also that reasonable and intelligent confidence in the Parliaments of the country which is essential to their success. In the same way we have urged the maintenance of efficiency in the Services, not for the purpose of withholding power from the new Governments, but because we want those Governments to start with such weapons as will enable them to ensure to the land peace and tranquillity.

It is a commonplace that no government can be strong without popular support, and no small degree of risk is justified in obtaining this. I have said that my community believes strongly in taking a safe line in constitutional development, but in measuring the degree of safety attaching to any forward move we have to consider the alternative risks. Safety does not lie in any one direction and danger in another. We should much prefer Provincial autonomy instituted previously to any change in the Centre, or even before it is decided on at the Centre. We realise, however, while deploring it, that there is not sufficient confidence existing between India and Britain to-day for India to be content with merely Provincial autonomy and a declared intention of development at the Centre. We are, therefore, united with our fellow Delegates in demanding that the whole framework of Federation and Provincial autonomy shall be determined at the same time. We earnestly hope that Provincial autonomy will be introduced Province by Province, the varying needs of each being recognised in its constitution. In some Provinces—and here, in recognition of communal difficulties, I refer especially to Bengal and the Punjab as well as to the United Provinces and Bihar—two chambers appear to be desirable. Discussions during the past few days regarding the introduction of reforms at the Centre have been, to our way of thinking, of extreme value; in fact, I am not sure that they have not proved to be some of the most illuminating in the whole course of the Conference. They have clearly defined the attitude of different Delegates to these wider questions which alone induced so many of them to take part in these proceedings, as compared with the narrower and specific needs of different communities. In this respect I would like to refer briefly to a matter which must loom large in the minds of my countrymen in India. Our demand to be allowed to take an equal share with our Indian fellow-subjects in the commercial and industrial development of India is vital to us. It does not imply any disadvantage to India nor any handicap on her industrial development, and the generous spirit in which our demand has been received in almost every quarter is, I think, a happy augury for the future. It will create a good impression on our community, and will facilitate mutual agreement on conditions which may be included in a Convention such as was foreshadowed at the first Session of the Conference and which I hope will at some time materialise to the satisfaction of everybody.

Such a Convention to my mind would assist commercial competition to remain on a friendly basis and I think would clear the way for that joint enterprise in commerce and industry which cuts in such a practical manner across racial differences. Indeed, as mutual respect and understanding increase and lead to the separation of ordinary competition and legislative protection from all merely racial considerations, I hope that the interests of Indian and British Chambers of Commerce will be found to be identical.

The task now lying ahead of all parties is to prepare the ground for the new constitution. I wish to pay our sincere tribute to those of our fellow-Delegates whose high sense of public service compelled them a year ago to face no inconsiderable opprobrium and take their place at this Conference. It must be a great satisfaction to them that their action paved the way for the most representative gathering it would be possible to select from India for this Second Session of the Conference.

Without their work Mahatma Gandhi might have remained for many people in this country a more or less mythical figure, making salt in forbidden places or weaving all kinds of yarns.

Mr. Gandhi: You mean spinning all kind of yarns.

Sir Hubert Carr: Yes. As it is, we have the great advantage of having him and his fellow-workers from the Congress at this table, where he has become a real living figure. His views are better understood, and his national aims—in so far as they envisage India as a member of the British Commonwealth—have our sympathy, even if we have to agree to differ in some respects as to the methods of achieving them. On his part I trust he cannot but have gained a fresh understanding of the British outlook, and realised that it is entirely friendly to the political development of India.

If this has been achieved I feel we shall all take a broader view of the constitutional question and not merely accept but help to devise such methods legislative and administrative as may preserve the peace of India, while fostering the growth of national life.

I trust that as a result of the contact between Indian politicians and His Majesty's Government, all parties will feel compelled to throw their whole active influence into allaying the feeling of unrest in India, and preparing the calm conditions in which the peoples of India may rise from the present economic distress.

Any continued encouragement direct or indirect to break the law, either violently or non-violently can only prove in the long run a crime against the younger generation, a hindrance to the prosperity of the country, and a grave difficulty for future Indian statesmen and administrators.

This Conference has given His Majesty's Government clear indications of the lines on which the peoples of India want India to progress, and I trust no mistaken historical analogy or false conception of the present stage in constitutional progress will be allowed to influence any of us in playing our parts. Let us be clear.

We sometimes speak as though India is to make an entirely fresh start and that she presents, as in the past when sovereignty has changed, a clean slate.

Obviously this is not so. India is a progressive country with vast assets of great value, capable of immense development and in course of development.

The constitution is changing but the King-Emperor remains the common centre of India and the Empire. The interests of India will, I submit, be best served by calm, sane and steady—I do not say slow—steady progress towards that destined goal within the British Commonwealth which will satisfy the aspirations of India's people. I believe and hope that in time to come this Conference will be looked upon as a milestone towards that end.

Mr. Iyengar: My Lord Chancellor, in the few observations that I propose to make at this plenary session, I desire only to emphasise for the consideration of His Majesty's Government the position in which we, who have come to this Conference, found ourselves when we were invited this year. The invitation was based upon the declaration of policy made by the Prime Minister in January last, and the first sentence of that declaration, My Lord, was as follows:—

> "The view of His Majesty's Government is that responsibility for the government of India should be placed upon Legislatures, Central and Provincial, with such provisions as may be necessary to guarantee, during a period of transition, the observance of certain obligations and to meet other special circumstances, and also with such guarantees as are required by minorities to protect their political liberties and rights."

My Lord, that declaration was taken and I think rightly taken by all of us to mean one thing and one thing only. If I may employ colonial phraseology, the general doctrine that has been accepted as a result of British political history is this, that a colony can be governed from home, that a colony can govern itself, but it cannot be governed by a combination of both. Therefore, when His Majesty's Government made this declaration, we took it to mean a very definite statement that they contemplated a parting on the part of His Majesty's Government and the British Parliament with the right and responsibility of governing India, and were prepared to confer upon the people of India the power to govern themselves. The phrase "Central and Provincial" also, My Lord, seemed to indicate that His Majesty's Government was quite aware of the constitutional position which this actually involved in India. As has been repeatedly pointed out in the course of discussion, the Government of India, whether it is Central or Provincial, is carried on under responsibility to the Parliament of Great Britain. Therefore, the only proper and the only correct step for His Majesty's Government to take, if they want to confer responsible government upon India, is to divest themselves of this responsibility and to hand it over to legislatures responsible to the people of the country;

and that we considered, Sir, was implicit in the declaration made in January last.

If that is so, then I, as one who was invited, took it to mean two things. In the first place, it cannot connote the idea that mere Provincial autonomy as such is possible without Central responsibility. If Parliament is going to cease to be responsible for the government of India, then it is not possible for Parliament to say that the Provinces shall be governed without responsibility to Parliament, but that the Central Government in India shall continue to be responsible to Parliament. It seems to me a politically inconceivable conception that Provincial autonomy and Central responsibility to Parliament can go together. All that can be meant, therefore, whenever people talk of Provincial autonomy is, that Provincial autonomy merely means that Parliament is, under certain conditions and with due safeguards, prepared to devolve the power vested in it into the hands of certain Provincial authorities. Even to-day, where there is so-called responsibility in the hands of Ministers, the superintendence, direction and control over the government in India does subsist in law and in fact with Parliament and the Secretary of State, and the extent to which the Provincial Governments have liberty and the Ministers act under some sort of responsibility to the Legislature, is provided for only by means of rules drawn up by the Secretary of State in Council, by means of which he devolves power. Therefore, the fact that power is devolved under severe restrictions and safeguards by the Secretary of State in Council—and is resumable at will—in financial and other matters, makes it perfectly plain that Parliament cannot hand over its responsibility, except into the hands of a Legislature which can actually take over the entire responsibility for the government of India.

Therefore, My Lord, I took this declaration of His Majesty's Government to mean that Parliament has, once and for all, made up its mind that it will not govern India, whether by means of the Secretary of State, whether by means of the Government of India, whether by means of the Provincial Governments under some system of dyarchy, or whether by means of devolution rules, which may give power under stated conditions to the Central or Provincial Authorities.

If that is the implication of this declaration, then I submit that it is inconceivable that Provincial autonomy by itself can be considered to come within the meaning of this declaration. Therefore, if my interpretation of this declaration is correct, namely, that it involves the transference of the power of Parliament into the hands of people in India, that again, My Lord, takes me to the second point that I want to put.

This declaration speaks of transitional safeguards and reservations. Now, we have had a good deal of discussion about safeguards and reservations, but what I desire to state is, that if, as has been suggested in the Report of the Federal Structure Committee, Defence, External Relations, and to some extent financial matters

are to be what are called Crown subjects, then I say Parliament continues to control the Government of India in regard to those subjects. Now, if they are Crown subjects and if Parliament continues to control them, to that extent responsibility has not been transferred to Indian hands by means of this declaration.

The point that I want to make, My Lord, is not that there is no need for transitional safeguards and reservations, because these have been accepted by all of us who are attending this Conference. But these subjects should not be made Crown subjects in the sense that the responsibility of the Government of India with regard to those subjects will continue to vest in His Majesty's Government under responsibility to Parliament.

The point of view of those who agree that safeguards or transitional reservations are necessary is on all sides that these are essentially the operations which must be gone into in the process of transference of power from the British Parliament to the Indian Parliament. Therefore, so far as the process of transference is concerned, the measures that are necessary for that purpose are necessarily matters of discussion and negotiation; but, from the point of view of strict constitional theory, my desire is, My Lord, that they should not be treated as in any way indicating that certain important subjects of vital concern to our country should continue to be under the control of His Majesty's Government and Parliament here.

That is the position which I want to emphasise, for this reason. These reservations and safeguards should not be of such a character as to swallow responsibility, or in any way materially to reduce the substance of self-government or responsibility.

If we therefore examine the reservations from this standpoint, I feel that proposals which are made, or which may be made, for the purpose of giving Central responsibility without a Federation, by means of amendment, as one member put it, of six clauses in the present Government of India Act—such proposals seem to me entirely to ignore the fact that the declaration made by His Majesty's Government in January last negatived any such supposition.

Therefore, My Lord, we come back to the position that we should go ahead with the work of instituting this Federation on the basis of Indian responsibility. That is the only way by which the policy of His Majesty's Government could be carried out. The difficulties urged against immediate action have taken curious shapes and methods. I do not want to question the position of His Majesty's Government. I quite accept the statement that His Majesty's Government has not come to conclusions and will be guided in their decisions by the agreements reached and opinions expressed here, but we have been told in various ways, and various criticisms have been made for delay and inaction that appear to me to be distinctly dangerous in the situation that faces us in India. At one time we were told that unless the Hindu-Muslim issue was settled it was impossible to think of any responsibility at the Centre. At another

time we have been told, " Oh, until the Princes make up their minds to come in in large numbers to the Federation it is not possible to start the Federation; therefore it is a matter that takes time ".

Now, My Lord, the Muslims made their position clear, perfectly clear, the other day, and I think the Princes have made it equally clear that they are as anxious to proceed with the Federation as any other part of this Conference; and now, Sir, we have been told that the situation in Bengal and the situation generally in other Provinces will make difficulties in the constitution of this Federation—as if the situation was not due to the fact that we have been delaying in making this constitution for full responsible government for the country. The only remedy for that is not repression, but to go ahead with this work and to constitute this government with full responsibility as quickly as we can.

One other matter which I would desire to urge on Your Lordship is the question of these safeguards which we have been asked to discuss. I believed, when I came here that the first issue that would have to be put before us was the safeguards and the discussions upon them. What I desire to say is that in so far as these safeguards are necessary it is the Government, and His Majesty's Government in particular, that are in a position to tell us what the difficulties are, what the safeguards are that ought to be or could be made. As it was, we were left to grope in the dark. We were asked to assume certain hypotheses and to suggest if this happens, what will happen, if this happens what will you do, if the other happens what will you do? That was so on every one of these questions. Take, for instance, the question of financial safeguards. The actual position of Indian finance, the manner in which the Government has to face its difficulties in connection with the protection of India's credit outside, these are all matters specially within the knowledge of His Majesty's Government and the Secretary of State, and unless we are told what these difficulties are, unless it is made clear what are the difficulties with which we are confronted and which we have to overcome, it is not possible for us in an abstract manner to discuss these things.

And what happened, My Lord, when these financial safeguards were discussed? We went on making various proposals; we went on speaking of Financial Advisory Councils. On our part there was a very large measure of agreement on the financial proposals made. And then the Secretary of State for India came into the House and said: " of course financial safeguards are necessary, but in the present very delicate state of the financial position in India and in England we are not in a position to give you details as to what in our opinion should be met." There again we are held up by the position which His Majesty's Government have assumed.

Similarly, My Lord, with regard to defence and external relations. They are matters especially in the knowledge of His Majesty's Government, and if it is inconvenient for His Majesty's Government to discuss them all publicly in a very big Conference like this, it was perfectly open for them to take leaders into their

confidence, discuss it with them *in camera*, tell them what are the things they would like to do and to have, and that would have eased matters.

I therefore feel, My Lord, that in all these matters we are still at the beginning; but I do think that if only His Majesty's Government make up their minds that they shall be properly discussed, and where people like Mahatma Gandhi are here in a position to come to any reasonable and proper settlement on behalf of the country, it was the duty of His Majesty's Government to have taken such leaders into their confidence, to have asked them to meet their difficulties and to arrive at an agreement. I think, Sir, that a step like that will not take years to accomplish; it can be done in a few weeks. And if that could be done even now, then I say there is practically no difficulty in going ahead with the Bill for introduction into Parliament. Because, once we are able to settle the question of safeguards by frank and free discussion between His Majesty's Government and the leaders, privately if necessary—once that is done, every subject upon which delay and difficulty are alleged to exist is a matter which could well be taken up in due course and which could well be brought up later on in connection with the completion of the constitutional structure.

My Lord, in regard to Indian Reform and in regard to the Indian Constitution the usual practice in England has been, whenever reform Acts have been passed, not to burden the House of Commons with too many details as to the provisions that are necessary to put the constitution into operation. In the days of the old Indian Councils Act of 1892 it was the late Mr. Gladstone who said in the House of Commons that he thought that the duty of the House of Commons was to discuss and settle principles, and to leave the details to be worked out in India. That policy was adopted by Lord Morley when he passed the Indian Reform Act, and when the Regulations were framed later on in the course of twelve months. The same principle was followed in the Montagu-Chelmsford Reform Act. There are things which necessarily cannot be put into the Constitution. Some may be put in the schedules. There are things which can be brought up by Rules which can be placed before the House subsequently. These are details, the work of which can go on.

We have also, as Your Lordship may recollect, Dominion parallels. When the South African Act was passed there was a Commission appointed to settle financial relations. Boundary Commissions were appointed in other constitutions, and a Franchise Commission has also necessarily to be appointed. All these things will of course take time, but that ought not to delay the introduction of the Constitutional Statute into the House of Commons.

On the question of the minorities problem, My Lord, I do not want in any sense to minimise the humiliation and the regret that we all feel at not being able to settle it among ourselves. But on that matter again I would only call attention to the words which the Prime Minister used this morning when he said: "I am as

hopeful as I was at the beginning that by further work, by the exercise of goodwill, by the facing of the actual facts of the situation, and, above all, by the well-known pride of the Indian representatives, they will find a way out of this very difficult and troublesome situation." I am sure, My Lord, that the difficulties in that behalf will very soon be overcome.

The question as to the inclusion of the Princes is again one of the things that has been dealt with. I have always felt in regard to the Federal Constitution, as you yourself pointed out, Sir, in the Report of the Federal Structure Committee, it will not be possible to bring all the States into the Federation at once. The constitution, as every other constitution, must contain a clause which will enable the Federation to include States and territories as and when they want to come in and on such terms and conditions as may be agreed. That is the only way in which we can proceed. We must start the constitution straight away without waiting for everyone or even for a large number to come in before we start. My Lord, I trust that there will be no avoidable delay on the part of His Majesty's Government in going ahead with the work and assuring us that these safeguards will be satisfactorily agreed to and that Federation will be completed.

Sir Manubhai Mehta : My Lord Chancellor, I owe you an apology for being on my legs this evening. I remember your Lordship's admonition to us at the Federal Structure Committee that those who had been members of the Federal Structure Committee need not indulge in the privilege of again speaking before the Plenary Session in order to economise time and to give an opportunity to their brethren who had not had the pleasure of speaking before the Committee, a greater time to express their thoughts at the Plenary Session. I would remind Your Lordship, however, that I was only half a member of the Federal Structure Committee. I was a member only for the last month, and as I was only a half-time member I will only occupy half the time at this Meeting before we disperse.

I have another mission to discharge which accounts for my speaking. I have received a message from His Highness the Maharaja of Bikaner imploring and beseeching the Plenary Session to consider his proposal to enlarge the Upper Federal Chamber. As His Highness the Maharaja of Bikaner has been connected with the Federal Structure Committee almost from its inception, I am sure the members of the Conference would willingly pay some regard to his wishes. It was with that object, My Lord, that at the last Session of the Federal Structure Committee which met to consider the Third Report I ventured to suggest that the number of members of the Federal Upper Chamber should be increased. Instead of its being 200 I suggested that it might be enlarged to 300, and my suggestion received influential support from a section of British-Indians—from my friend the Right Honourable Mr. Sastri, Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru. Pandit Malaviya, Mr. Jayakar and even Mr. Joshi. I am fully aware that it had not unanimous

support beause I know my friend Sir Akbar Hydari from the very inception of the Conference has been for a smaller house and he therefore wanted the total number to be fixed at 100. On the other hand there were members who asked for 500 and for a Lower House of 700. I therefore chose the reasonable mean and merely suggested a figure of 300 which I am glad met with a large and enthusiastic support from my British-Indian friends. This afternoon I had also the privilege of getting direct knowledge of the wishes of some of the lesser or so-called small States. They do not want a large Chamber but would be satisfied with 200 members in the Upper Chamber.

I fully appreciate their apprehensions. Very likely they are not satisfied with the constitution of the Chamber of Princes. They are aware of certain invidious distinctions made and certain exclusions from the Chamber of Princes, and on that account they do not wish to see the principle adopted in the case of the Chamber of Princes applied to this Federal Chamber. I would assure them that we have no desire to exclude even the smaller States from participation in the Federal Chambers, and I would only request them to bear in mind that representation in the Federal Legislature is not confined merely to the Upper House. In cases of conflict of opinion we have provided for a joint session of both Houses, so that if the smaller States do not secure individual representation in the Upper House, but if they secure representation in the Lower House, their interests will be equally safeguarded; and representation in the Lower Chamber has been declared to go by population, so that in their case their population will of course be represented in the Lower Chamber.

In this connection I would request the Conference to bear in mind the necessity of distinguishing between the two principles of representation in the two Chambers. In the Upper Chamber it should be the Governments that are represented; in the Lower Chamber it is the population that will be represented. If I remember aright what was said by Sir Mirza Ismail, he put before the Committee a scheme of his own.

Chairman : A Federal Council, was not it?

Sir Manubhai Mehta : A Federal Council, in which the governments were to be represented.

Chairman : As in Switzerland.

Sir Manubhai Mehta : If it is to be the governments that are to be represented, I put it to your lordship that in the case of governments no distinction is made between larger States and smaller States. Look at the constitution of any other Federation. In the case of the United States Senate, whether it is New York or whether it is a small State like Florida, whether it is Illinois or whether it is Texas, whether it is Massachusetts, or whether it is Ohio, they are all equally represented in the Senate; each State sends six members to the Senate. The same principle of equality applies in the case of other Federations; it applies in Australia, in South Africa and in Canada. What I mean to say is that if

about 120 seats are found for States they would find individual representation in the Upper Chamber, and those which are left out will naturally find their representation in the Lower Chamber.

Sir Akbar Hydari : They would each get one seat?

Sir Manubhai Mehta : That is what I said; equality of representation is essential if governments are to be represented. That has all along been my contention, Sir, and I again venture to place it before this Conference.

Now, Sir, I should like to say a word about the future programme, because on that point the views of the Indian States have not been sufficiently placed before the Conference. We have heard certain disquieting rumours, and it would seem from three or four remarks made in the Conference to-day that there is a tendency to think of starting with Provincial autonomy, keeping Federation or responsibility at the Centre as a goal, a distant goal to be reached by stages—they may be rapid stages or they may be slow stages—and not as something to be immediately attempted.

To me, Sir, the word " Provincial autonomy " looks like a contradiction in terms. Provincial autonomy with centralised control has no meaning. As long as there is centralised control the Provinces cannot be autonomous, and if the Provinces are to be autonomous then the Centre ought to transfer more and more departments to the Provinces, more and more powers to the Provinces. There would practically be no Centre except the Federal Centre, so practically there will be about eleven independent States instead of Provinces, added to our 620 States. There will be less chance of any harmony between them, and the idea of Federation must then be deferred perhaps for ever, because, My Lord, the Indian States have their own difficulties, which will only be then intensified. In order to ascertain or to determine what their financial rights are and what their position as regards paramountcy is, three years ago His Majesty's Government appointed an Indian States Committee presided over by Sir Harcourt Butler. That Committee fully investigated the relations between the States and the paramount power, and came to the conclusion that financially the States were entitled to certain reparations or restoration. It was when the idea of federation came into view that the States agreed to waive their separate financial claims and to throw these financial contributions into the common federal pool. If federation is to be postponed, if the Provinces are to be made autonomous, the States would not agree to the finances being transferred to the Provinces or to take their decisions on questions of joint concern from the Provinces. As the Prime Minister put forward last year, the three essential and fundamental elements go together. Fundamentally, the three points were responsibility at the Centre, a Federal Government and safeguards. As the British Delegates held, there cannot be responsibility at the Centre unless there is federation at the Centre. Conversely there cannot be federation unless there is responsibility at the Centre. We are prepared to federate only if there is a responsible Centre, and

unless our financial rights were fully safeguarded we would not agree to any transfer of powers to the Provinces, and the Provinces cannot become autonomous without our agreeing to such transfer. This is the dilemma in which we are placed, and I appeal to the Statesmen of the Empire to find out a solution. The difficulty is not insoluble. Difficulties there are, but difficulties are always there to be overcome, and I do not despair; with the excellent galaxy of talent in the British Cabinet, I do not fear that such a difficulty will remain insoluble.

My Lord, it is said that the inability to solve the communal question is the main difficulty. In the case of Provincial autonomy, will not the communal difficulty also play the same part? I am thinking it will play a greater part. In Bengal and the Punjab, which are the two Provinces where the communal question is most difficult, how can they have any self-government unless this communal question is first solved? And if the communal question is solved, where is the difficulty of responsibility at the Centre?

Last time, Sir, at the meeting of the Federal Structure Committee my friends gave sufficient warning—the British Statesmen here—about the consequences of leaving this question in this unsettled state. Perhaps the British Statesmen are shying at the difficulties of providing a solution of this question for the communities which they themselves may not afterwards accept. But, Sir, there is no perfection in this world; no constitution is perfect under the sun. I believe in perfectibility, but not in perfection. There is always room for more and more advance. Even if you begin with a small commencement, there is always room for advance. I believe, Sir, in what is called spiral progress. Sometimes there is a decided advance; sometimes there is some recession; but even if we recede we go up to a higher plane. With each advance we go to a higher plane. That is characterised as spiral progress; and I appeal to you, Sir, to bear in mind that if there is perfectibility, there is no difficulty that is insoluble.

I will not indulge in any warnings or threats. I will only appeal to your self-interest, Sir. I will appeal to your enlightened self-interest. The British nation has been called a nation of shopkeepers, and as inheriting the Indian Empire from the factors and counting houses of the East India Company that epithet is well-earned; but there need be no opprobrium in that; the British Government or the British nation need not blush at being called shop-keepers. In my Sanskrit language there is a metaphor in which we praise under the guise of blame and we blame in the guise of praise. Here, then, when I call you a nation of shopkeepers it is really that I appeal to your wisdom; I appeal to your prudence; I appeal to your enlightened self-interest.

Consider the economic consequences of leaving India to all the discontent that is sure to brew there. It was your great national patriot, Edmund Burke, who called the present age in England an age of economists, sophists, and calculators. You are calculators;

you are economists; perhaps you are sophists. Therefore I appeal to you because the same great statesman and patriot, Edmund Burke, prided himself that the British Nation was the palladium of liberty; it was the great defender of equality, liberty, and the equal rights of all nations. The British Nation has fought for the defence of lesser nations. It is in the interests of suffering and stricken India that I appeal to you to defend her status.

India has often been described as the brightest jewel in His Majesty's diadem. Let not that jewel be dimmed or tarnished by the sighs of anguish and the tears of affliction that would flow if India is left to stew in her own juice. I appeal to Your Lordship and to the whole British nation. May God give you the strength to decide this question to the greatest good of the three hundred and fifty millions entrusted to your care.

(The Conference adjourned at 7-35 p.m.)

Mr. Jayakar : Mr. Prime Minister, the critical hour in the deliberations of this Conference is fast approaching, and twenty-four hours from now we shall know what is the issue of this great experiment that we have been making for nearly a year. Sir, when the announcement was made about the holding of this Round Table Conference, many thoughtful men in India felt that it was a great experiment—great in the sense that it was perhaps the first time in the history of the world that a proud race was told to achieve its freedom by means of negotiation, goodwill and persuasion. The Conference was an announcement to the world, as many people in India thought, that the old world of ideas had disappeared in favour of the new, and that what used to be achieved in former times by force of arms and revolution, was going to be achieved in the new world by persuasion and negotiation.

In this unfortunate country of yours where vision and imagination are often blurred by fogs, it will not be perhaps so easy to realise the internal significance of the Round Table Conference; but I am not exaggerating, Sir, when I say that many men of thoughtful mind in India thought that it would be a great achievement if the Round Table Conference would yield results towards the freedom of India. As we sat from day to day discussing in the Federal Structure Committee, I as a humble member thereof have often wondered what this great experiment was going to lead to. We are now within twenty-four hours of this great achievement, Sir, if it leads to success, you will have made good your claim not only to the esteem of India and will be able to say that even a brown people could achieve their freedom by persuasion, by negotiation. You will have clearly proved to the world that what used to be achieved in former times by mutual fear has been achieved in these days by mutual goodwill and by mutual regard. That, Sir, is the great significance of this Conference.

You can therefore imagine with what great expectation your announcement to-morrow, Sir, will be awaited in India by the three hundred and fifty millions. Some of them have scoffed at this attempt; some have been openly sceptical; some have been its great critics; but they will all be agreed that if it leads to success it will be a great achievement indeed.

Sir, we have laboured for nearly a year. I am very glad to say that the foundations laid during the last year have been found by subsequent enquiry to be truly and well laid. This year, as the Lord Chancellor will vouch that as we have gone into details many of us have been impressed with the foundations laid last year. The wisdom of those foundations has been made more and more clear to us as we have gone into details. Those foundations were, Sir, speaking generally, federation, Central responsibility, and safeguards. Perhaps the greatest tribute to the wisdom of that scheme was paid when the Irwin-Gandhi Pact was entered into, in one

clause of which Mr. Gandhi—no doubt a severe critic of our affairs last year—accepted the three pillars upon which he said he would build if he visited this country, as he eventually did. No greater tribute, Sir, could be paid to the wisdom of that scheme than the fact that it found a very eminent place in the scheme of settlement which took place between Mahatma Gandhi and Lord Irwin. This year we have gone into many details, Sir. I do not wish to take up the time of the Conference in going into them. As I said before, the more we have gone into these details the more have we been convinced that the scheme as outlined in last year's Conference was an exceedingly sound scheme.

We have made further progress this year. For instance, speaking of the Princes, we have taken one great stride, that there has been a universal desire on the part of British India and the Indian Princes to consider the claims of the smaller States. This year we have had time and leisure and also the inclination to consider the Federation scheme from the point of view of the smaller States. Both on the side of the British Indians and the States willingness has been shown to make the Federation complete by conceding the just demands of the smaller States. The smaller States last year were left very much dissatisfied, and perhaps in consequence of it they gave in a measure strength to what was called the Patiala-Dholpur scheme. I do not regard that scheme as a rival of Federation at all. I am full of hope, as was expressed in the speech of Sirdar Jarmani Dass, whom I wish to congratulate on his maiden effort before the Conference—a wise and helpful speech—wherein he suggested certain lines of compromise between the Patiala-Dholpur scheme and the scheme of Federation as outlined last year. I see, Sir, no conflict between the two, and I am sure that when we go into details, some means will be found of reconciling what seems to be in conflict but is not really so. I am full of hope that the good elements of that scheme will be combined with the good elements of Federation, and I have no doubt that when they are worked out it will be seen that the seeming conflict between the two can be reconciled.

Coming to British India, we have made progress. I am sure the esteemed Chairman of the Federal Structure Committee will agree with me when I say that we were all surprised at the amount of agreement achieved in the Federal Structure Committee. Of course there were differences, as there must always be when so many intelligent men meet together and discuss, but I am sure I am voicing the sentiments of the large bulk of the Federal Structure Committee when I say that the amount of agreement achieved is not inconsiderable and affords a good basis upon which future work can proceed.

Take only two or three subjects, Sir, I have not time to go into all. Take for instance, that most fruitful source of difficulty, namely, commercial discrimination. I am proud to say that the formula evolved last year, by which I stand, was a very wise formula indeed—wise in more senses than one, wise mainly in the fact that

it was elastic. Its great virtue lay in the fact that it was not rigid, but was capable of widening out as occasion arose. Our critics called it vague. Our critics in India thought it was a surrender. That was no doubt a criticism made by those who were ignorant of its elasticity, or were of opinion that no good could come out of deliberations to which the Congress was not a party. Our present Report only emphasises that formula, if I may say so. Unanimity was expressed that for matters of purely racial discrimination there should be no scope in the future Government of India. Everybody agreed, Mr. Prime Minister, whatever their other differences, that there should be no discrimination in commercial matters on the ground of race, nationality, or religion. The differences arose when we came to details, and even there, I am very glad to state that on four or five points which were made there was agreement. That key industries should be specially treated is now accepted. That infant industries we should have the opportunity to protect is now agreed. That unfair competition should be stopped by regulation is agreed. That Indians can claim a larger share in those interests which now are vested in the hands of one group is now agreed. That a convention should be established in future appropriate to the occasion when India is free and gathers experience—that experience we have not now, but we claim we shall have it in course of time—is now agreed. I say that on these four or five points there is complete unanimity.

Unfortunately, the Report was very hastily accepted, if I may say so, My Lord Chancellor, but that was nobody's fault. We were running against time. Consequently a few things have crept in which may require revision. Sir Cowasji Jehangir referred to one, namely, administrative discrimination. These will have to be revised, but I am confident that our Report contains a basis on which we can work in future.

Coming to financial safeguards, equally was I surprised at the unanimity. I was privileged to have private talks with representatives of European commerce, along with a few other friends, and day after day as I listened to their conversation I was surprised at the points of agreement. Of course when you are dealing with such large interests as British commercial interests in India, you find it a very thorny question. It is obvious that there are many facets of that question which require to be carefully examined. What, however, surprises me is the amount of agreement and not the amount of difference. The good sense with which European merchants advocated their case showed that they realised what minorities rarely realise, that points have to be won by goodwill and not by obstruction or opposition.

My friend Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru has made a suggestion which I am sure is full of possibilities for the future, namely, the suggestion of a Financial Council. He has thought out a scheme and we have made progress with it. He offers a solution which I am sure is pregnant with possibilities. I am very glad to find that

European and Indian members representing commercial interests saw the advisability of accepting that scheme in general outline.

There is a slight difference at the moment, but I am not without hope that the contending views will be reconciled. The Financial Advisory Council, as proposed by Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, is to last only until the Reserve Bank is established, and it is to be confined to matters of exchange and currency. Mr. Benthall, however, wants it to be continued beyond the time when the Reserve Bank is established, and he wants it to be operative in all financial matters. That is a point of difference, but I am not without hope that it will eventually be reconciled.

The third point that I wish to refer to was at one time the subject of a conflict which it seemed difficult to adjust. I refer to defence. The two sides have now come nearer. I am one of those who believe that in making experiments of this novel and colossal character the one thing necessary is the frame of mind which centres itself on broad agreement and not on differences; and from that point of view I am surprised how near the view-point of the Congress comes to the provision that was accepted by us last year. Mr. Gandhi, who has placed the Congress point of view before us with frankness, says he wants defence to be a transferred subject, but he agrees that large powers may be left in the hands of the Viceroy during the transitional period by way of overriding the ordinary working of the constitution. Our scheme last year was that it should be made a Crown subject, but that large powers should be given to the Legislature in matters which are not directly concerned with the safety and tranquillity of India. Therefore, if you analyse how near these two positions come, Mr. Gandhi agreeing to give large and overriding powers to the Viceroy, and ourselves agreeing that there should be large powers in the hands of the Legislature, I feel confident that at no distant date in the future a formula will be devised which will satisfy both. We must work in a spirit of compromise, and we should be grateful to the Lord Chancellor for drawing attention to paragraph 8 of the Report, as embodying the spirit in which we worked, and in which we shall have to work in future, *viz.*, the spirit of finding a mean between two opposite views. I have no doubt that if we work in that way the seeming conflict even in regard to defence will soon be reconciled.

We thus find that we have a great deal of agreement on important questions. We were warned last year that when we came to deal with details our scheme would be found very unsatisfactory and faulty. My experience—and I am sure it is the experience of many of my colleagues—is that the consideration of the details has confirmed our belief more and more, that our scheme stood the test of details.

Now, Sir, I come to the last and perhaps the most important part of my speech. The scheme is there before you, Sir, and it is a scheme which has three pillars: federation, Central responsibility, and safeguards. The scheme has now been accepted in India as a basis of future work by the greatest political organisation, the

Congress. The question now is, Mr. Prime Minister, will your Government accept this scheme or will they reject it, or—what is perhaps a greater danger than rejection—will they mutilate the scheme? I wish to be quite frank, because we are on the eve of an eventful day, and I should be guilty of not performing my duty if I did not truly express what I think of the importance of your declaration to-morrow.

Will this scheme be accepted as a whole? About rejection I have no fear, because it restores all parties to the *status quo ante.* Each party goes its own way. If it is wholly accepted, well and good. I frankly say, however, that what I am afraid of is, that for parliamentary exigencies, the scheme may be mutilated in the sense that we may be offered the trunk, or the head or the feet. Sir, that would be a great mistake. We want the scheme to be offered to India as a whole. We know that there are many details of the scheme which have to be worked out; patient investigation and enquiries have to be carried out; but that will be no reason for mutilating the scheme in the sense of offering to India something which is only a part of the scheme.

The scheme, Sir, is one, united, inter-linked. There cannot be Central responsibility without Federation. There cannot be Federation without Central responsibility; and both have to be worked out in the terms of proper safeguards in the interests of India. May I ask attention to that excellent speech that Sir Manubhai Mehta made towards the end of the day before yesterday. It brings out the way in which these three are intertwined. You cannot take one part out of it and say: we offer India so much as a first instalment of experiment. Sir, in my opinion, that would be a great mistake.

When I was talking to a public man of your country, he said to me: " Oh, but you realise a house cannot be built without storeys; that the first storey has to be built, then the second storey, the third storey and the fourth one. Therefore, you must allow us to build the constitution storey by storey." I warned this public man and said: " It is a dangerous analogy for you to adopt, because if you adopt it you are up against many sound arguments. When you adopt the analogy of a house and an architect, may I point out that an architect presents the whole scheme to the employer before the construction is begun. He tells him what the whole scheme is. If the architect said to the employer: " Your first storey is complete; go and live in it. I will construct the second storey while you occupy the lower one," he would be a bad architect indeed. I would not go into the house until the whole house was complete. I certainly realise that a good architect builds storey by storey; but no sound architect asks me to go and occupy the first storey, with operatives working over my head. And, may I say further, that a good architect does not allow five or six years to elapse after the first storey is complete. We, Sir, live in a land where, in some parts, we have three hundred inches of rain every year, and not the miserable twenty-five you have in your country. If you build the

first storey and allow three hundred inches of rain a year for six years to drench it, your first storey will disappear in the course of the six years, the foundations will be washed away, the bricks will collapse, everything will be gone, and when you come to build the second floor you will find the first has disappeared and the rain has washed out even the foundations.

Therefore, Sir, this is a dangerous analogy. We are quite prepared to make allowance for the exigencies of your Parliament. India has waited for a hundred and fifty years; it can wait for a year or two more if you make your intentions perfectly clear. If you bring out your whole scheme in general outline, removing the difficulties step by step, surely India has enough patience if you make your intentions clear and do not take an unnecessarily long time over completion. We know that parliamentary drafting requires time. Enquiries have to be made. Many questions have yet to be settled. We are prepared to give you enough time for the *bonâ fide* prosecution of these enquiries and the working out of these details, but we have no time to wait in order that you may try political experiments. Remember, Sir, in your country as in mine, Federation has many enemies; it has enemies in many quarters; it has enemies amongst those who do not wish to give Central responsibility to India; it has enemies amongst those who wish to preserve all the outworn parts of the ancient machinery; the Secretary of State, and may I say, with great respect to Sir Samuel Hoare, the India Office, they want to keep intact all the machinery which has interfered with the progress of India. It has likewise enemies amongst those who do not wish to see stability and ballast introduced into the Central Legislature in order that they may make it the plaything of party politics and popular freaks. And, lastly, may I say, it has enemies amongst communal zealots, who measure the progress of India in proportion to the voting strength of their particular community. All these enemies are against Federation and it is therefore dangerous to leave it to be worked out in the future.

Mr. Prime Minister, it is as much your child as the child of the Federal Structure Committee. It has to grow into adolescence; it requires time to be nourished. By all means have that time, provided it is spent in nourishing it, for making it more strong, and not for the purpose of destroying the possibilities of its birth or growth. We are often asked: why are we so much harping on Federation? I am pledged to Federation because that it the only way of making more easy the transfer of power at the Centre, and I shall be quite frank, there is a section in your country—and Lord Reading voiced the sentiments of that section—a party of caution which wants responsibility to be given only when there is a possibility of that responsibility being worked out with stability. We want to make the transfer of the power at the Centre more easy. Likewise we do not wish to leave the Princes behind us. India can progress best when it goes on together. To leave the Princes behind, from our point of view, is a great danger, Sir. If you leave the Princes behind, you cannot have reform all

round. You will have to keep intact all those centres of control outside India against which we complain. I do not wish to mention details, but all those irritating centres of power and control outside India which belong to the ancient system; you cannot wipe out unless you have Federation and the Princes come along. I am told there cannot be any Federation between autocracy and democracy, that it will be a conflict. I am not afraid of that conflict, because I have such infinite faith in the working of the progresses of democracy that I feel confident that autocracy cannot withstand them for a long time.

These are some of the reasons for which we have set our heart on Federation. Please do not make the mistake of leaving Federation aside for the moment and offering to India something different from Federation. We have made up our minds to go together, the Princes and the people of India, and after listening to the excellent speech made by His Highness the Nawab of Bhopal yesterday what doubt can there be, Sir, that the Princes are in earnest about Federation? In certain communal quarters a few days ago, this Federation, Sir, was described as a mirage. I went home and looked up your best dictionary—and I found that the word had two meanings. One meaning is illusion, a kind of "mâyâ," as we call it in the philosophy of my country. Another meaning is a distant and difficult goal. If it means the latter, I have no quarrel with the word. If, however, it means an illusion I say that we are in very good company in hugging this illusion to our hearts. The Lord Chancellor said only the other day that Federation is not only possible but probable. In your speech last year, Sir, you dwelt on the idea of federation. It was likewise accepted as a basis in the Irwin-Gandhi Pact. Are all these eminent men deluded fools—hugging something to their hearts which is a delusion, and not a reality? If so all I can say to those critics who call it a mirage is that we are in very good company. I have therefore to submit that any scheme which makes distant the time of federation will be an unsatisfactory scheme. We know that Federation wants time and we are prepared to give you reasonable time, provided only that you show that you are going on with your work and not merely taking time in order to put it off.

I submit, Sir, that these few suggestions which I have ventured to make in the course of my speech may be taken into consideration. I thought it was my duty to speak quite frankly from my point of view. I think this is a very great opportunity for your country. The question is whether you will take hold of it. Everything depends upon the way you make your choice. We can only watch you make the choice. The privilege of making it is yours. I do not wish to utter any threat—I see no occasion for it—but, if I may say so in all humility, a great deal depends upon to-morrow which is the most eventful day in the history of this Conference. Young and old in India are watching on the tiptoe of expectation to see what is going to be the issue of this Conference. Is it going to be success or is it going to be failure, failure in the sense in

which I have spoken? I do hope that Providence will enable you to decide that it will be success.

Lord Reading : Mr. Prime Minister, I have had opportunities of expressing my views on the subjects which are now before the Plenary Conference during the sittings of the Federal Structure Committee and I do not propose, therefore, to enter into any detailed reference to those subjects. I am, however, desirous at this final stage of this sitting of the Conference to take into review the happenings of the Conference at various stages through which we have passed, the position in which it now stands and most important of all, the final stage to-morrow when you, Mr. Prime Minister, will deliver the concluding address. I would just remind the members of the Conference that when we first met considerable anxiety prevailed lest the discussions should prove futile and there should be a breakdown of the Conference. When we separated at the beginning of this year, after the declaration you made, Mr. Prime Minister, there was a distinctly favourable change in the minds and hearts of our Indian friends.

They left for their homes encouraged and hopeful, with some of the distrust and suspicion which had existed removed, if it had not been for the time being completely dissipated. They returned to India determined, so far as they could, to take their message throughout India, and in that way again to cause a change in the political conditions of India.

When the Conference was resumed, and particularly when the sittings of the Federal Structure Committee began this autumn, we had present with us Mr. Gandhi and others who had not hitherto taken part in the deliberations, who had stood outside in a totally different position, but who now joined in the discussions in the Federal Structure Committee; and it cannot be doubted that their presence here has added influence and authority to the proceedings of the Committee and of this Conference.

It must be remembered that during these proceedings especially we have discussed many and varied problems with frankness, and we have expressed our opinions with candour. Sometimes there have been moments of apprehension; sometimes things have been said that have not been pleasant to the ears of some who were attending here either on the one side or on the other; but the patience and the courtesy of all who have taken part in this Conference have managed to overcome all those difficulties, and in the end the method of this Conference, with its full discussion, its free and outspoken opinions, its friendly contacts between all the members, has been in my judgment, Prime Minister, completely vindicated. Whatever critics—and there are many—may have to say, in my view the method of conference has triumphed, and in my hope the method of conference will continue.

Prime Minister, I only desire to say, and very briefly, a few words in relation to the big subjects that we have discussed. We are at the final stage, and I can well imagine the anxiety of all, and perhaps especially of our Indian friends, to hear the message

that you, on behalf of His Majesty's Government, will express to us, to be able to form some opinion of how the British Parliament will respond, and to have a conception of the procedure that is to be adopted in the future and a vision of that which they are all anxiously awaiting.

Well, I am not disposed myself to discuss any of the big questions. I will make my observations in very few sentences. It is unnecessary for me to expatiate upon the policy that I would adopt. I expressed my views at some length in January of this year. I stand to-day where I did then. I see no reason to change those views, although I am quite prepared to vary methods in the directions in which it may be desirable. But the broad policy stands; in my view the policy for India which really must warm the hearts of all Indians as well as of the British who love India, is this great policy of Federation, of an all-India—of 350,000,000 people at present. Who shall say, under a prosperous all-India, what its population and power eventually will be, an all-India composed of the Princes of India, who have taken so notable a part in our gatherings at this Conference; which brings into close relations British India, the ruling States of India, the governing powers of British India, all into one close connection by which they can together unite in working out the destinies of the India of the future?

Prime Minister, I made my observations then in favour of a Federal Government of this character with an executive responsible to a Federal Legislature, subject to certain safeguards and conditions; and there I stand to-day. Prime Minister, in my view nothing that has happened, nothing that we have heard, has in any way served to weaken the conviction that I had formed in January, not hastily, not by any means without due thought and deliberation, not without having felt the influence of this Conference and of contact with my Indian friends. I expressed it then as the view which, as we thought, must be made effective for the future, for the benefit of India in order that India might progress and in order that we might meet the wishes of India.

I have myself the strongest belief in the connection of Britain with India. I do not hesitate to say, although it may not commend itself to all of you, that the connection of Britain with India has in many respects been to the benefit of India, just as I will undoubtedly admit or assert that the ties between India and Britain have been to the benefit also of Britain.

Where we stand now is that we are considering, as a result of much discussion, what actually is to be the plan to be put forward. I am not going to discuss that; that is, after all, now, Prime Minister, for you and His Majesty's Government, to be brought again before the British Parliament. I will make this observation upon it: I believe that the true policy between Britain and India is that we should in this country strive all we can to give effect to the views of India whilst preserving at the same time our own position, which we must not and which we cannot abandon. There

are obligations that we have incurred, and burdens which we have had to bear in the past of the trust which has been reposed in us. We must carry out those obligations whatever happens. But having said that, I will do everything I can consistently with it to give effect to the views of Indians who wish to take part in their own government.

Now, Prime Minister, there is little more that I want to say, save that I would ask you to bear in mind all of you, that we can never hope at this Conference, however long we may sit, to arrive at agreement on all points. It is very rare indeed that that takes place in any conference, either between men of business or between Governments, but what we can reach—what I hope we shall reach—is sufficient agreement to enable India to accept the proposals that will be put forward eventually before the British Parliament by His Majesty's Government.

Now, Prime Minister, with that view, may I say that we may hope, as a result, that this final solution of our problems will be such that it will command its acceptance both of the British Parliament and of India? For myself, I will say that this hope is strong within me. I am encouraged by all our discussions in the belief that the final outcome of our proceedings will be a great step forward in the progressive march of India to her ultimate destiny.

I am, I think, as I look around, the one most advanced in years in this gathering. I have no political ambitions of my own. I have no personal desire to reach any position in the future. I have a desire, an overwhelming desire, an all-pervading ambition to serve my country and the Empire. I have been fortunate enough in my life to hold the great office of Viceroy of India, to know all that that means, to understand by contact the views, the aims, the aspirations of our Indian friends because I came in close contact with them. It is the office which, Mr. Prime Minister, next to yours I cannot but think is the greatest in the Empire. Whatever my merits or demerits may have been I brought away with me many ties of friendship with Indians with whom I became acquainted during my stay there. Above all, I carried with me and still carry within me warm affection for India and a profound interest in her future. I most profoundly wish, indeed I devoutly pray, that I may live to see the Federation of all India in active being, that this Federated India may be prosperous and happy in its future, and that above all as it progresses forward towards its ultimate constitutional destiny it will always desire to continue a willing partner in the British Empire.

Diwan Bahadur Ramachandra Rao: Mr. Prime Minister, the observations I would like to make on this occasion must in the nature of things be very brief. Like some other Delegates who were not members of the Federal Structure Committee I have many observations to make on some of the controversial questions relating to all-India Federation. I have a good deal to say on many of the topics which were discussed and many others which remain for discussion. It seems to me, however, Mr. Prime

Minister, that in view of the statement recently made in the Federal Structure Committee that some machinery is to be devised for continuing the work of this Conference it becomes unnecessary to go into detailed criticism of the whole scheme as outlined in the Report.

I am, as all of us are, in general agreement with the scheme for an all-India Federation sketched in the Report. There are, however, one or two matters of fundamental importance which cannot be passed over at this stage relating to the Federal constitution sketched in the Report. The position of the people of the Indian States in the scheme for an all-India Federation embodied in the Report is not satisfactory. The members of the Conference will remember that I raised this question last year at the Plenary Session, and I had some hope that, in view of the strong and insistent public criticism in India that has been levied against the Federal Constitution since January last by the people of the Indian States, as also in British India, the present Report of the Federal Structure Committee would show an improvement when the scheme came again under a detailed examination. I am, however, profoundly disappointed that the viewpoint of the people of the Indian States has not received adequate consideration at the hands of the members of the Federal Structure Committee.

In paragraph 27 of the Third Report of the Federal Structure Committee the Committee express the opinion that the question of the method of selection of the States' representatives in the Lower Chamber must be left to the decision of the States, but they say also that it cannot be contended that it is of no concern to the Federation as a whole. Certain individual members of the States' Delegation have given assurances to the Committee that in those States where representative institutions exist and the members are in a position to express their views, arrangements will be made which will give those bodies a voice in the selection. This position is not satisfactory.

The people of the States have not been heard. They have not been accorded any representation at this Conference, and this persistent refusal to hear the views of the people of the States, apart from their Rulers, does not absolve this Conference from the duty of scrutinising proposals for the new constitution of India as a whole from the point of view of the peoples of all the federating units. It is from this point of view that every minority in India, however small, and every interest in British India, has been invited to this Conference, and has assisted the Conference in examining the proposals placed before it from their own standpoint, and it would have been fitting if this course had been adopted also in the case of the seventy million people of the Indian States.

In a note circulated last year on this subject, and also in another note circulated a few days ago, I have drawn the attention of the members to the fundamental importance of protecting the rights and liberties of the people of the Indian States, and I have laid stress on the fact that this is necessary not only in the interests of the States themselves but also for the satisfactory working of the

Federal constitution. I venture to think that the Indian Princes and the other members of the Indian States' Delegation have a unique opportunity afforded to them of uplifting the vast mass of the people of the Indian States from a condition of political submersion to the full status of imperial citizenship. It cannot be a matter of satisfaction to those who are responsible for the organization of this Conference or for members of the Conference, that while the political aspirations of their fellow-citizens in British India are being realised, the people of the States should be prevented from aspiring to the standards of free and many-sided citizenship made accessible to their brethren in their neighbourhood. I think, therefore, that it is absolutely essential for the success of the future Federation that the co-operation and goodwill of the people of the Indian States in the working of the new constitution should be secured. Their Highnesses, the Rulers of the Indian States, and their Ministers have been some of the strongest advocates at this Conference for enlarging the political freedom of India. Some of them have been members of several international gatherings and are cognisant of the reactions of political thought and action throughout the world. I appeal to them, therefore, to make all reasonable concessions to the legitimate political aspirations of their own people. This would, I venture to say, be an act of the highest statesmanship on their part. The present scheme of representation should provide for the representation of the people of the States by a system of direct election in one of the chambers of the Federal Legislature. This will, in my opinion, strengthen the position of the States in the Federal Legislature rather than weaken it. Federal citizenship should also be conferred on the people of the States and embodied in the constitution, and deportation of the people of the States from British India under the Foreigners' Act and *vice versâ* should cease. We have heard a great deal about the necessity of enacting in the constitution fundamental rights for the protection of the minorities. Many proposals were put forward in the Federal Structure Committee and also in the Minorities Committee towards this end, and there is a general consensus of opinion at this Conference that certain fundamental rights should be embodied in the constitution. The question requires further examination. Their Highnesses the present Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes and the Maharajas of Bikaner and Kashmir stated at the last Conference that these rights have been already conceded and proclaimed in their States. If that is so, there cannot be any objection to the extension of these constitutional guarantees to the people of the States, and I sincerely hope and trust that when the legislation is undertaken this matter will not be forgotten.

A natural corollary to the grant of fundamental rights to the people of the States is that when there is a violation of these rights, the Federal Supreme Court should be enabled to afford relief to the people of the Indian States. The right of *Habeas Corpus* does not exist in many of the States. I presume that it was the intention of the members of the Federal Structure Committee to extend judicial protection to the people of the States, and that the Supreme

Federal Court should be the final judicial authority in all these matters.

Let us all hope that Their Highnesses will take note of the wishes and aspirations of their own people as expressed in numerous Conferences held throughout the States, since the scheme for a Federation has been formulated. It is a matter of satisfaction that the movement for constitutional government in the States has taken shape and is now the accepted goal of the people of the States. All future developments in the States will, I venture to state most respectfully, at this Conference depend on the wisdom and foresight with which the rulers of the Indian States and their Ministers will shape this movement for their own benefit and for the welfare of their people. It is a matter for the utmost satisfaction to me and I presume for many other members of this Conference to note the sentiments of Mr. Jarmani Dass, who spoke on behalf of His Highness the Maharaja of Kapurthala about the need for constitutional government for the States. I beg to urge that the principle of responsibility of the administration of an Indian State to the people and to their representatives in a popular Legislature should be clearly recognised consistently with the continuance of the monarchical order. The representatives of the States sitting at this table have made it quite clear that they can only enter an all-India Federation on the understanding that the Federal Government will be responsible to a Federal Legislature, subject to transitory safeguards. I am referring to the speeches of His Highness the Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes and Sir Manubhai Mehta on Saturday last. The advocacy of self-governing institutions for India as a whole and the continuance of autocratic rule in the States cannot by any means be reconciled. I venture, therefore, most respectfully to submit that constitutional government is the best means for securing the permanence of their thrones, the loyalty of their people, and the unhampered progress of their States, and is the best step which Their Highnesses can take for the successful working of an all-India Federation which we and they so ardently desire.

Another matter which has a bearing on the future Federation, and which has not as yet been discussed either here or in any of the Committees, is the territorial redistribution of the Provinces. So long as India has a unitary constitution the final decision in regard to the redistribution of Provinces and the creation of new Provinces in British India is left properly to the Governor General in Council, acting under the directions of the Secretary of State in Council. What would be the position in respect of this matter when a Federal Government and a Federal Legislature come into existence?

It is true that, in making a start with the Federal constitution, we can only proceed on the basis that the boundaries of the British Provinces are what they are at present, but it has to be fully borne in mind that the demand for a redistribution of areas and readjustment of boundaries of the Provinces in India is a very real one, and is likely to arise for solution almost immediately after the new

constitution is set up. Many administrators in India have felt in the past that the existing Provincial boundaries " embrace areas and peoples of no natural affinity and sometimes separate those who might be more naturally united." With the exception of Burma, no Province represents a natural unit; that is to say, that the Provinces do not stand for differences of race, language or geographical distribution. They are purely administrative divisions of territory. Apart from the opinions of administrators, popular sentiment in recent years is in favour of such redistribution. The authors of the Nehru Report discussed the whole subject of linguistic Provinces in considerable detail, and important political organisations in India have passed resolutions favouring the redistribution of Provinces on linguistic lines. The series of memoranda presented to the Indian Statutory Commission by the Government of India contain the history of the agitation for an Oriya Province, an Andhra Province, and a Karnataka Province. The Simon Commission referred to this matter at some length and expressed the opinion that " as the time is coming when each Province will have its own Provincial Government and its Provincial resources it is extremely important that the adjustment of Provincial boundaries and the creation of proper Provincial areas should take place before the new process has gone too far. Once the mould has set, any maladministration will be still more difficult to correct." They therefore recommended the constitution of a Boundaries Commission and regarded the appointment of such a Commission as a matter of urgent importance.

Some proposals for redistribution of provincial areas were brought forward at the First Session of this Conference. The Raja of Parlakimedi advocated the constitution of an Oriya Province, and the constitution of the Orissa and contiguous Oriya-speaking tracts into a separate province is now under examination. The separation of Sind was agreed to in principle. During the present Session memoranda urging the formation of an Andhra Province have been circulated by the Raja of Bobbili and Mr. Giri. I am in entire agreement with the request for the constitution of an Andhra Province without delay. Mr. B. Shiva Rao has urged in another memorandum the formation of a Karnataka Province. Khan Bahadur Hafiz Hidayat Husain has urged the separation of Agra from Oudh.

In these circumstances there can be no doubt whatever that the question of redistribution of Provincial areas will become a matter of great importance with which the Federal Government and the Federal Legislature under the new constitution will have to deal. I think, therefore, the legal and constitutional position in regard to this matter will have to be examined carefully, and the necessary provisions have to be enacted. The existing British Provinces will, on the establishment of the new constitution become units in an All-India Federation, and the question as to the method and manner in which any of the Federating Units of British India should be redistributed and as to how new Provinces should be

created and admitted into the Federation requires very careful consideration.

In the list of Central subjects appended to the Second Report of the Federal Structure sub-Committee, it is stated that "Territorial changes, other than inter-provincial, and declaration of laws in connection therewith," should be classified as a Central subject. I will invite the attention of the members to the remark opposite this item, that "it (territorial changes) has already been decided to be a matter to be dealt with under amendments to the constitution." If territorial changes involving the redistribution of British-Indian Provinces can only be effected by a process of amending the constitution, this method is likely to cause inordinate delays and would make it too difficult to have essential territorial changes in the boundaries of Provinces which have been urged for many years. I feel, therefore, strongly that a more flexible method should be devised without the violation of constitutional proprieties.

Finally, I should like to say a word on the subject of defence. I regret to say that many important and complicated questions relating to the problem of the Indian Army have not been discussed at this Conference. The constitutional aspect of the question has received some attention in the Federal Structure Committee, but there are many other questions relating to the organisation, composition and control of the Indian Army, which have formed the subject of active discussion in India for several years. I have referred to some aspects of the problem in a separate memorandum which has been circulated to-day to the members of this Conference, and which may be taken as supplementary to what I am saying now. But on this occasion I shall make a very brief reference to the subject. We have had hitherto a feeling—those of us who are taking part in the political life of India—that, as far as India is concerned, British statesmen, whatever be the political party to which they belong, have a habit of conceding the principle in platitudinous declarations but negativing the same in practice. The India Act of 1833 contained a statutory pledge that His Majesty's Indian subjects were eligible for employment in the public services of the country, irrespective of creed, class, or colour. The history of the Indianisation of the Civil Services all these years is a fitting example of the method in which this pledge was broken in practice. Various devices were adopted to perpetuate the dominance of the British Bureaucracy in the country and the concentration of all controlling power in the administration in their hands. Though it is nearly one hundred years since this declaration was made, the governing service in the country, *i.e.*, the Indian Civil Service, is still predominantly a British service at the present day, notwithstanding the appointment of Royal Commissions every twenty years. The exclusion of Indians from the commissioned ranks of the Indian Army till very recently is one of the most galling disabilities imposed upon Indians, and the history of its removal reveals the same tale of obstruction and opposition as has been adopted in the case of the Civil services. This matter has been under consideration

for several generations, and when His Majesty the King-Emperor came to India in 1911 for the Coronation Durbar, the Government were searching for boons which might be given to the Indian army to commemorate the occasion, and it was suggested that Indians might be admitted to the King's Commissions. But the mass of military opinion at that time was against the proposal and no announcement was made. His Excellency the Viceroy publicly stated in 1917 that the discussions of the question of commissions to Indians dated back to pre-historic times, that it has been the subject of discussion by government after government, and that years slipped by and nothing was done. He also announced that, as a beginning, nine commissions had been conferred on military officers who distinguished themselves in the war. The next step was the announcement in 1919 of the grant of ten commissions to Indians per annum. This was considered by the British military classes a very revolutionary step. It was said at the time that "It is a change which, once begun, must extend and, because it must have the inevitable result of placing eventually British officers under the command of Indians, is not one to be lightly undertaken." This is still, I feel, the predominating feeling of the military services and every proposal that has since been made is looked at from this angle of vision.

If India is to attain a status similar to the Dominion status of Canada, Australia or South Africa, in a reasonable period of time, and if the statesmen of Great Britain intend to carry out the intentions of the declaration by the Prime Minister made in January last and without any evasion or equivocation, they must make up their minds on this fundamental question of the self-defence of India. It will not do to play with the problem. The rejection of the very modest proposals of the Indian Sandhurst Committee clearly showed that those in authority do not wish to face the facts, and the Report of the Indian Military College Committee presided over by the present Commander-in-Chief has not made any improvement in the situation.

I have no doubt that Dr. Moonje, who was one of the members of the Committee, will refer to this matter. I would invite the attention of the Conference to the able and exhaustive minute of dissent of Sir P. S. Sivaswamy Aiyer and General Rajwade, and the series of problems referred to therein relating to the Army that are awaiting solution. A new orientation of military policy and a different organisation of the Indian Army is absolutely necessary, in view of the new political status that is now in sight, and the whole question of the pace of Indianisation should be re-examined by another committee. I would in conclusion, associate myself fully with all that has been stated in the Federal Structure Committee and at this Conference about the need for a simultaneous introduction of responsibility, both at the Centre and in the Provinces. Any other course will be disastrous and I beg to express the hope that the statement which you will make to-morrow may be such as to make it generally acceptable to India, and that our expectations will be realised.

Sir Phiroze Sethna: To-morrow, the Second Session of the Indian Round Table Conference will come to a close. All honour to Lord Irwin, and to those who, like Mr. Wedgwood Benn, conceived with him the brilliant idea of holding a Round Table Conference in London and inviting thereto representatives from British India, and also from the Indian States to sit at the same table, with representatives of the different political parties in this counrty, with a view to discussing the Indian problem and arriving at a common measure of agreement upon which the new constitution might be framed.

The First Session of the Conference made considerable headway, and we expected that, during the Second Session, we should move faster and, perhaps, go farther. Unfortunately, circumstances have intervened which have not brought about such a result, but, nevertheless, Lord Reading was perfectly right when he said this morning, that the Conference cannot be regarded as a failure, as is tried to be made out in some quarters. In addition to the reasons advanced by His Lordship, I would say that the holding of the Conference here has awakened the British public to a sense of their responsibilities to India, and has acquainted them with the exact position; and, relying as we do on the British sense of justice and fair play, we have no doubt that Dominion status, with safeguards, is now quite within our grasp, to be followed, after a reasonably short interval, by complete Dominion status, such as exists in the other parts of the Empire.

We assumed, Mr. Prime Minister, that this common measure of agreement was meant to mean as between all sections of the Conference, but the procedure followed imposed on the Indian delegates alone the responsibility for expressing their views and reasons on the different points brought before the Conference. The Government has, unfortunately, kept us in the dark as to what their intentions are. That has, in fact, meant that we have worked under considerable difficulty, and it would have been very much better if their intentions had been made known to us, particularly in view of the nature of the Conference, in view of the important matters that we are discussing, and also in view of the very grave consequences that will follow should the decisions not be in accordance with the wishes of the Indian public.

It is no secret that certain provisional proposals were advanced by the Government in an informal manner. The Secretary of State warned us not to rely upon " Headlines in the British Press," but we could not help doing so, and our anxieties are not even now at rest. We consequently await with trepidation the announcement which will follow to-morrow.

If any constitutional proposals are to be a success, then Sir, they must win the support and the co-operation of the popular political opinion in India, and for that, who can be better judges than the British Indian delegates, who would have been able to advise the Government to follow the right course, had they known what the Government's intentions were. Provincial autonomy has been

thought of or is believed to be thought of as an initial instalment to be offered by Government. If that is the idea, then, Sir, the consequences would surely be disastrous, as has been pointed out by speaker after speaker. Those who entertain this idea of provincial autonomy to start with, are certainly not in touch with the progress of events in India. We are told that the solution of problems which must be solved before a scheme of Federation could be introduced would take some years. Now, what is meant when the phrase "provincial autonomy" is used? It is not real provincial autonomy. What is meant is responsibility in the Provincial Government. This is a very different thing. Real provincial autonomy cannot exist without responsibility at the Centre. Provincial autonomy and autocracy at the Centre, as Sir Manubhai Mehta rightly pointed out yesterday, is a contradiction in terms. This is the form of advance which was suggested in the Report of the Simon Commission, and if it is only this which is to be granted, then there was no use convening a Round Table Conference, asking us to come here a distance of 6,000 miles and to spend so much time and take so much trouble. It might be argued, and it has been said in certain quarters, that in the preamble of the Act introducing Provincial autonomy it might be stated that Federation would follow. But such a vague promise will not satisfy the Indian public.

Supposing this were done, I would ask the Conference to consider what would be the consequences. There would be considerable agitation everywhere, and it would rest on the Ministers in the Provincial Government who, under the new arrangement, would be responsible to the Legislature, to try and check that agitation. How could you possibly expect such Ministers, who do not believe in Provincial autonomy alone, but also insist on responsibility at the Centre at the same time to check such agitation. Their efforts would certainly fail and it would consequently give a handle to people here to say that because Ministers have been unsuccessful Provincial autonomy has proved a failure and there cannot be responsibility at the Centre.

It was for these reasons, Mr. Prime Minister, that some of us addressed you a letter some time back pointing out the very serious consequences which would follow if it was contemplated to give only Provincial autonomy. Speaker after speaker, both in the Federal Structure Committee and at this Conference, has dwelt upon this point, and you will have noticed there is perfect unanimity amongst us, whether the speakers come from British India or from the Indian States, whether they are Europeans or Indians, whether they are Hindus or Muslims. Of course the Muslims and the other Minorities insist that when responsibility at the Centre is given, their interests should be safeguarded—which of course is quite right.

Mr. Prime Minister, memories of people are short in these days. I wonder if people in this country, and particularly those who have suffered most by the boycott movement in India, do recognise the importance of the great achievement of Lord Irwin in bringing about an agreement with Mr. Gandhi. Will it be right now to do

anything as a result of which there might be a second and perhaps a more bitter struggle? Are we to have another and a greater upheaval in India? If people here think that guns, aeroplanes or ordinances will be able to effect sufficient control of the situation, I may be pardoned for observing that they will be living in a fool's paradise.

Whilst I make these observations I am conscious of the difficulties in regard to the communal problem. It is most unfortunate that we have not been able to settle it; but it now rests on you, Mr. Prime Minister and the Government, to settle these differences as you think best and to ask us to work the new constitution in a manner that will lead to peace and contentment in the land.

Sir, in his very able speech, Sir Manubhai Mehta expressed approval of the scheme circulated by Sir Mirza Ismail which proposed for India something resembling the German Constitution of 1870, which had an Upper House consisting of the representatives of the various constituent governments of the Federation. I confess I am not enamoured of the same, and I would prefer to proceed on the lines that we have gone on, but if Government are to give any thought to Sir Mirza Ismail's proposal I would like them at the same time to consider the memorandum for an Advisory Federal Council prepared by a prominent and senior Indian member of the Indian Civil Service, Mr. Alma Latifi, and to which our pointed attention has been drawn by Mr. Gandhi.

Mr. Prime Minister, when we accepted your invitation to come here we did so in the firm belief that we would not go back without receiving Dominion Status, with safeguards to start with, and that after a short interval of time complete Dominion Status would follow. These special safeguards have been engaging the attention of the Federal Structure Committee, and now of the Conference. They are four: External Affairs, Army, Finance, and Commercial Discrimination. We have not much to say in regard to external affairs, and the great majority of us would be prepared to leave them in the hands of the Governor General during the transitional period.

In regard to the Army, I do not think, according to the discussions which have taken place, that we have advanced as far as we should have liked. In the first instance, this is a question which should have been properly handled, as it was during the First Session of the Conference by the Defence sub-Committee. Unfortunately, perhaps due to want of time, and other reasons, the matter was relegated to the Federal Structure Committee. Diwan Bahadur Ramachandra Rao, the speaker who preceded me, did make mention of the Chetwode Committee's Report. This Committee was appointed on the recommendation made by the Defence sub-Committee. Nowhere in that recommendation was it laid down that the intake in the contemplated Indian Sandhurst was to be limited to sixty per annum, and in reply to questions put by members of the Committee the Chairman persisted in not allowing any further

discussion but laid it down, as coming, I believe, from the Government, that the intake should not be more than this number. This we consider a great disadvantage. The Committee should have been given free scope to make its own suggestions.

In regard to military expenditure, if we had self-government we would certainly not allow it to run to the amount we are made to spend, and that is not the view of ourselves alone. May I be permitted, Mr. Prime Minister, to quote your own words, published many years ago, in which you said:

> "A self-governing India would no doubt insist upon bearing some definite share in Defence, but like the Dominions, it would settle how much it ought to bear; it would adjust the cost to its means and it would decide in what form it was to make its contribution, perhaps an Indian recruited Army. In any event, the present plan, by which India pays for the Imperial Army stationed there, without in any way determining its policy, is as bad as it can be. If the existing system of Defence is to last, the whole cost of the Imperial Army stationed in India should be borne by the Imperial Exchequer."

We are grateful to you, Mr. Prime Minister, for the candid opinion which you expressed in those days, and I am sure you take the same views to-day, and we hope, now that you are Prime Minister you will endeavour to do the best you can to so extend the powers of the Indian Legislature as to enable it to carry out those views, if not to the fullest extent, to a very large extent.

Coming to the matter of finance I would like to say, Sir, that very great anxiety has been displayed on the part of our British friends, but that anxiety I have no hesitation in saying is ill-founded. I can quite realise as Lord Reading observed this morning, that you have to look after the interests of those who have trusted you. I understand that by that he means those Britishers who trusted the Government of India and put their money into Government loans have to be protected. I do not think that either he or anyone else proposes to do anything to safeguard the interests of those also who have put money into private enterprises. That is their own lookout. I am quite in accord with the view that you should look after the interests of those who have invested millions in rupee or sterling securities. Between the two—namely rupee and sterling Government of India securities—these loans run to a total of somewhere about eleven hundred millions, the larger proportion of which is in rupees and the smaller in sterling. English investors have invested large sums in Government of India sterling securities and not rupee securities, but altogether out of the eleven hundred millions the holdings of British investors are bound to be far less than half this total. Is it then contended that for the sake of deliberately harming the British investors, the Indian Legislature would take steps whereby at the same time they must perforce harm the larger number of Indian investors? To do so will be tantamount to cutting off one's nose to spite one's face.

Indians will be cutting the ground from under their own feet if they adopt a policy whereby their credit in the world would be shaken. Indians know full well that their country is poor and that for years to come we shall have to borrow money from outside India. How can we borrow unless our credit is unimpaired? Therefore to think that we shall not have any regard for our own interests is to assume that we will persist in adopting a suicidal policy. The suggestion has been made, and a very valuable one, that the Finance Minister should be helped by an Advisory Financial Committee. If that suggestion is accepted and the Finance Minister is an Indian it will meet with the wishes of the entire Indian community, and I hope that it is not too late for you to formulate such a scheme. What we desire is complete control in financial matters and that as soon as possible.

On the subject of Currency and Exchange we have progressed no further. We have come to the conclusion that Currency and Exchange are not to be transferred to the Legislature until a Reserve Bank is established. The question of a Reserve Bank was fully discussed last year and there were differences of opinion as to whether, owing to the depletion of reserves, a Reserve Bank could be established within a reasonably short time.

In January last the gold and sterling reserves had dwindled down to 96 crores, but to-day they are at even less than 46 crores, and consequently the possibility of the establishment of a Reserve Bank is still further removed, and we do not know, therefore, when currency and exchange will be transferred to the Legislature.

Consequently I do not think it would be wrong to say that the transfer of financial control is but a mirage, and I use the word as my friend Mr. Jayakar did this morning in the sense in which he used it according to Murray's English dictionary, that it means (1) delusion or (2) that it is a long and distant goal.

I now come to the other safeguards, known as the safeguards against racial or commercial discrimination. I stated to the Federal Structure Committee, and I repeat, that this is not a case of racial discrimination. It has to do with inequality. Up to now very considerable inequality has prevailed. I had occasion to refer to it at some length at the last Plenary Session, when I said that it was quite easy for an ordinary European merchant to settle a business matter with a Government officer over a whisky and soda at his club, but that it was very difficult for even a prominent Indian to do so; in fact, he would have to kick his heels for hours together before he could gain admission to the official's room: I know all that has been changing since the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms and will go on improving in the future, but this inequality in the past has rankled in the minds of the Indians and made the position of the Britisher so very much stronger in commercial affairs, stronger that it would otherwise have been. My friend, Sir Cowasji Jehangir, quoted yesterday the case of a prominent Indian firm whose senior could not get anything out of the Government, whereas his paid British official was able to do so. These instances

can be multiplied, and our European friends at this Conference or outside have not dared to contradict them and cannot dare to do so, for the simple reason that until recently this sort of thing was an every day affair. Indians do not want to discriminate against the Britishers in the matter of commerce. All we want is what, after considerable difficulty, we were able to decide upon last year in consultation with and with the concurrence of Lord Reading. All that we want is that there may be industries which, in the opinion of the Legislature, should be confined exclusively for the benefit of the nationals. In such cases, only, and they would of course be very rare, the Legislature might favour the nationals. I would, however, go further and say, as in fact I did say in the Federal Structure Committee, that if such a decision of the Legislature is not acceptable to the Britisher, it might be left open to him to appeal to the Supreme Court or the Federal Court whichever is established, so that he may not have any grievance after the decision of such higher authority. I still hold that the formula accepted last year answers our purpose very much better, and I hope we shall continue to adhere to it.

One word with regard to Burma. In December last, when the Conference was in Committee, Mr. Jinnah put to you, Sir, a question in regard to any definite announcement that might be made, and your reply was that no announcement in favour of separation would be made without a discussion in the Plenary Session. No such discussion was held, and yet on the 21st August last the Government issue a communiqué according to which the Burma Round Table Conference was to be held *before* and not *after* the Indian Round Table Conference. There is a sentence in that communiqué which says:—

> "It is intended that the Burma Conference should assemble at such date in November next as will allow the Federal Structure Committee of the Indian Round Table Conference (so far as can be calculated in advance) to have completed their proposals, but before the Session of the Indian Conference as a whole has terminated."

Unfortunately, that has not been so. The same communiqué goes on to add that—

> "when the results of those deliberations are known there will be an opportunity for a review of the whole position by all the Parties concerned before any final adoption and proposal to Parliament by His Majesty's Government of measures to implement their provisional decision in favour of separating Burma from India."

Sir, because that Conference has not yet started its work and we are ending ours, some of us addressed you a letter suggesting you might be pleased to appoint about ten members of this Conference to join the Burma Round Table Conference. You have not seen your way to accede to that request, but we approach you again and we hope this matter will receive your favourable consideration.

Mr. Prime Minister, a very eminent Englishman, no other than Lord Macaulay, has observed:—

> "Many politicians of our time are in the habit of laying it down as a self-evident proposition that no people ought to be free until they are fit to use their freedom. The maxim is worthy of the fool in the old story who resolved not to go into the water until he had learnt to swim. If men are to wait for liberty till they become wise and good in slavery they may indeed wait for ever."

The same writer says:—

> "Of all the forms of tyranny the worst is that of Nation over Nation; heaviest of all yokes is the yoke of the stranger."

India was destined to have a foreign yoke about two centuries ago; and I for one regard it as a fortunate circumstance that that foreign yoke was that of the Britisher and not of any other European Power. But it is now time that even the Britisher should relax his hold and let India stand on its own legs. It has often been urged that the Britisher is a trustee, not only for those Englishmen who have made investments in India, but a trustee for the masses in India. The implication, therefore, is that the Indian himself cannot look after his own kith and kin, and it is the foreigner who can. If you are trustees, may we ask if you are discharging the duties of trustees in the manner in which those duties are generally understood? A trustee acts for one, generally a minor, who, when he attains majority, is given full charge of what is his own. It seems that India is always to remain a minor and not to attain its majority. Again, it is the duty of a trustee to look exclusively to the interests of his ward and not to look after his own interests. Can it be said that the trustee in this case has looked after the interests of the minor alone, and that he has not looked after his own interests to the same or perhaps to a greater degree? This state of affairs must now cease, and it will cease, because, as I have said before, we rely upon your sense of fair play and justice. Therefore, we are awaiting with bated breath, and we will come here to-morrow to hear the declaration that you will make, which will interest not only ourselves, not only the three hundred and fifty million people of India, but the world at large.

Captain Raja Sher Muhammad Khan: Sir, there are so many memoranda and letters circulated to this Conference that one can hardly read them all, and so many speeches delivered to this Conference that one paper rightly describes St. James' Palace as the greatest speech factory in the world. These speeches are repeated many times. When a soldier in the Army repeats his musketry qualification more than once he is called a third-class shot. As to our fellow Delegates who have repeated their speeches, I hope you will not call them third-class shots.

Mr. Prime Minister, as a representative of the enlisted classes and one who has had practical experience of active field service over

a number of years, I am grateful to you for having afforded me the opportunity of making a few observations on the question of the defence of India.

Everyone round this table will admit that the question of defence of the country is of vital importance and is essentially one in the consideration of which we should not allow our political bias and excessive enthusiasm to warp our judgment. I am confident, therefore, that this Conference will give the matter that deliberate thought which it deserves. The Federal Structure Committee in paragraph 6 of their Report on Defence and External Relations have expressed their opinion in favour of the establishment of a Council in India analogous to the Committee of Defence in this country. I welcome this recommendation and would venture to make the following suggestion in regard to the constitution of the Council that should be established by Statute. It should consist of two non-official members (one to be chosen from the Indian Legislature and one from the enlisted classes), one representative of the Commander-in-Chief, and one soldier of high rank. A Council so constituted will command the confidence of the *personnel* of the Indian Army, which is essential for its success. A purely non-official and political body may lead to discontent among the ranks of the Army.

If such a Council is established, I will not oppose the appointment of a non-official Army Member, who will be responsible to the Viceroy during the period of transition. The discretion of the Viceroy should not, however, be hampered, and it should be open to him to appoint any one he likes.

It was suggested by some speakers in the Federal Structure Committee that the size of the Army in India, and the number of British troops, should be reduced. I will beg my friends not to allow their patriotism and sentiment to colour their judgment. The Army is the most important part of every government. And, whatever our desires and ideals may be, we cannot deny that self-defence and self-preservation are real needs in the present fabric of the world. You cannot work any constitution in India unless you are free from foreign aggression and internal disorders. India has a land frontier of about five hundred miles, and the aggressive and warlike tendencies of our neighbours are too well known to require any emphasis on my part. It will, therefore, be unwise to reduce the strength of the Indian Army. The present strength of the Army in India, including reserves, etc., is just over 150,000. This number in my humble opinion is not too big for a huge country like India. During the Great War, Germany and France, whose populations are much smaller than that of India, each put five or six million men in the field. India's military power is not very elastic; and at a time of emergency a reduced Army will endanger the defence of the country. A hastily recruited and under-trained force will be a source of weakness and will spell disaster. If I may be permitted to quote from a very recent book of General Ludendorff called " The Coming War," " an increase in the strength of the army cannot be

accomplished in the twinkling of an eye." If this is true of Germany, it is still more true of India. I will not take the time of the Conference by stating in any detail the present strength of the armies of the various countries of the world. Suffice it to say that at present Germany possesses 100,000 Reichswehr. France possesses more, and Russia much more. Our armaments are much inferior to those of the European countries, and at a time of emergency we shall not be able to put an effective Army in the field. I therefore appeal to my fellow British-Indian Delegates not to imperil the safety of their country by suggesting a reduction in her fighting forces.

It was also pressed by certain speakers in the Federal Structure Committee that recruitment to the Army should be thrown open to all classes of Indians. Already there are no restrictions in regard to appointment to King's Commissions. As for recruitment to the ranks, I have great sympathy with the suggestion. I will, however, say this. The traditions of the present Indian Army are the highest and the noblest, and if these traditions are to be maintained it seems to me to be absolutely essential that the material which has been supplied to the army should not deteriorate. India is a very big country, and the material for the army is varied. On the whole, it may be the best plan to get the best men possible from whichever class we can. The rest of the classes can be left to follow the avocations for which they are better fitted. When Lord Roberts was asked why he did not throw open recruitment to the army to all classes, he replied, " India is a very big country with a vast population, and we must use the best material which we can get." I have the same reply to give. The case of smaller countries with homogeneous populations is different. During the Great War companies were raised from the non-enlisted classes. They proved a hopeless failure; and I have personal knowledge of the fact that on a long route march ninety per cent. of those who fell out belonged to the non-enlisted classes. We can hardly afford to play with the defence of our country, and pay men in peace time who either cannot or will not fight during the time of war.

As I had the honour of serving on the Indian Military College Committee recently appointed by the Government of India, I may be permitted to make a few observations on this subject. Having regard to efficiency and all the other circumstances of the case, the Committee have done their best to make it possible for a college to be started next year. In the beginning sixty commissions out of a hundred and ten will be thrown open to Indians. This, in my opinion, is a good start. If the experiment proves successful, with the excellent material that there is, the pace of Indianisation will no doubt be accelerated.

Mr. Prime Minister, if you will excuse me for saying so, you have grown very grey during the last few months listening to the claims and counter-claims of the various minorities. I must apologise, therefore, if I mention one more to be added to the number of

those minorities. I mean the *ex*-soldiers. They are not a very vocal body, and their claims are rarely pressed by the lawyer-politicians. This class served the country in her hour of greatest need, and will shed their blood if again occasion demands it. This minority alone has proved in the last world war that India is fit for substantial constitutional advance, and this is the minority for which our distinguished Pandit spoke so highly. It will only be fair if they are granted adequate representation in the Local and Provincial Legislatures. In any scheme of franchise, too, they should be given the right of vote to the Provincial and Central Legislatures.

In the end I will say to my fellow-Delegates that an efficient, effective army is the bulwark of every country, the very foundation of every constitution. Give your army a sense of security and contentment, and your political prosperity will march in an atmosphere of peace.

Mrs. Naidu: Mr. Prime Minister, when I look round this table I find experts in every department of life. There are men of law, some of whom act as " experienced foremen " in building the great architectural edifice of India's constitution like Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru. There are men of finance like Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas. There are soldiers who speak with no uncertain voice, like my predecessor. There are men representing Labour. There are those representing women who are neither a minority nor a special interest. There are landholders, there are champions of one interest or another, and I am beginning to wonder what place I can fill in an assembly like this. I have neither experience nor knowledge of all those expert matters that have been dealt with in the Federal Structure Committee. I do not understand the technicalities of constitution-making and therefore where all have spoken as champions of one interest or another I propose, if you will permit me, to speak only as an Indian, not as a lawyer, politician, soldier, on or off duty, or a member of the financial or princely classes, autocracies, or a member of the aristocracies that are represented here. You will permit me, Mr. Prime Minister, in view of the very grave issues before us to say something that comes from the very core of my heart.

Intellectual discussions, analyses and counter-analyses, proofs in favour of this point of view, or proofs in refutation—these are not the real issues to-day. My whole country is awaiting that word—penultimate or ultimate as you choose to make it—of England's attitude towards India. It has been my great privilege these many years to have lived very close to the heartbeat of my people. I know the heartbeat of their agony. I know the heartbeat of their hope. Are you going to-morrow to respond to the agony or to the hope of my people? That is the question I would like to ask you. The Lord Chancellor when he spoke at the opening of this Plenary Session after you, Mr. Prime Minister, used an image that sounds very beautiful. He talked of the Taj Mahal. He talked of its

beauty, its unrivalled proportions. He talked of the labour, the patience that went to the making of that beautiful edifice.

Did he forget, when he used the analogy of the Taj Mahal with its jewelled walls, its fretted domes, its marble turrets, that the Taj Mahal was built over the bones of beauty that was once alive? Did he forget it was slave labour that made those jewelled walls, and that the cementing force that keeps that edifice alive was the sweat and the agony of that slave labour, forced from day to day to build up that house of beauty? Is it the Taj Mahal that you are going to build after years and years of labour and years and years of patience, only to enshrine the dead bones of our hope—or are you going to realise that there is no time to-day, there is no patience to-day, there is no faith left to-day for so prolonged a piece of labour as the building of a Taj Mahal with jewelled walls ?

My people are dying of hunger. My young men and young women who do me the honour of looking on me as their comrade, their friend and their leader, are dying under the sweat and anguish of slavery, gild it as you will with any beautiful word out of your English language. What is the answer you will make to those young men and women, many of whom have studied in your universities and have been nourished on the history of the liberties of the great nations of Europe, and who are only held in leash from revolution because of the pledge and promise that we, their comrades, their servants and their leaders, have made, that we shall bring back from England something, some substantial alternative to their demand for that word you dread, independence?

That is the answer I want. My work has not lain in the Federal Structure Committee except as a spectator, but almost every day during all the weeks that I have been here my work has lain outside the Federal Structure Committee. I have been addressing large groups or small groups of men and women, both friendly and hostile to India, and it seemed to me that from the point of view of knowledge there was very little to choose between the friendly and hostile sections of the English people. The same arguments, only punctuated differently, were advanced by both. Was India really ready for freedom? Were not there dreadful things called communal conflicts? Was not the rumour of riot on every wind? Was not every street more or less symbolised by blood-stains that meant hatred, conflict, tumult, turmoil, that could only be assuaged, appeased, controlled or conquered by English forces and by English authority? This in brief, this in one word, is the attitude of both those who sincerely desire India's advance and those who, with equal and patent sincerity, refuse to think of India except as a helot, except as something chained to Empire.

What is going to be your answer to-morrow, Prime Minister, to the demand of my country for freedom? I have no use for words that are used either too rigidly or too vaguely. I have no use for a phrase like "Dominion Status" for instance. What does it connote? I have been in most of the Colonies of the Empire, and

in each Colony the meaning of the words "Dominion Status" is determined by its own special environment, its own special need and its own special achievement. It holds for me no particular meaning in any political dictionary so far as India is concerned. I have heard the world "Independence" used. That also is a word either too rigid or too vague. I know small independent countries that have not known how to manage their own internal affairs; that put one king upon the throne one day and cut off his head the next day, and are yet independent; which have not enough Ministers to send to the Courts of the world where they would be represented, have not enough soldiers, enough law-makers, enough subjects, have not enough Nobility or soldiers or anything necessary for the dignity and integrity of independent States. I am not enamoured either of the word "Independence" or of the words "Dominion Status"; but I do claim the liberty of India, with the fullest implications of what liberty must mean to every country in the world.

My illustrious leader, Mahatma Gandhi, when he has completed his twenty-four hours of silence, some time in the afternoon will no doubt reiterate in his own inimitable fashion the claim that he makes as the sole representative of the Indian National Congress. I will not seek to divide—because he will not allow me—the honour of such representation; but I too have been a President and a representative of the Indian National Congress and of that honour he cannot rob me, for he divides it with me. I am therefore making a claim on behalf of the nation as he does, not with the technical authority of being its representative at your councils, but with the inviolable right of having been its servant and its leader. I speak and I say this to you in England that when Lord Reading to-day talked of equal partnership, he talked of something that the best mind of India can appreciate, but only on its own terms.

What is this equal partnership? What is this equal partnership of which we hear so much? It can only mean a voluntary association on terms of equality, and to-day that equality is not there. You talk of a position equal to that of the Dominions. You forget that in your Dominions there are men who are your own kith and kin, of your own race, your own blood, your own culture and your own creed. They are held to you by a silken thread, whereas the irony of historic circumstances has forged a fetter round our feet, and therefore to hold us by a manacle round your wrist. Until you break the bondage of that manacle and we break the bondage of that fetter, there can be no choice either for you or for us of that equal friendship which is the only enduring guarantee of good faith among partners who are friends.

I, in the name of the cause that I serve, make this claim for equal partnership, but I repeat it is only on terms of equality that leaves full choice to you as to whether one or other of us chooses to diverage, it shall be so. But this is no threat, it is an offer; it is an offer to you in the critical moment of your history; it is an offer made in the critical moment of our history, and such a choice does

not repeat itself even though they say history repeats itself. You will say to me, as so many others have said: but how can India have this liberty? Look!—you could not solve the question of the minorities. Look!—the question of the Depressed Classes is a stain upon the civilisation of which you boast. You will say to me: your friends the Muhammadans, have refused to co-operate in making the last days of this Conference either successful or unsuccessful. You will say to me: there is that little group of Europeans not satisfied yet with any offer that you have made. You will say: we have missionaries who made converts in your country—there are Christians who do not feel secure against the majority of their own original caste. You will say many things to us. But I have always maintained that the greatness, the glory of India does consist in just these minorities, just such majorities. It is in the welding together of all these divergent things, reconciled and harmonised by my country into one integral nation, that makes the glory of India; and if we have not succeeded in solving for the moment those purely artificial questions of vulgar fractions, that arithmetic which divides a power into little fractions for this community and for that community, I do not feel that it affects in any way the vital issue of liberty for my land.

Mr. Prime Minister, you to-day are in authority. If a few scores of politicians have not succeeded in doing arithmetical calculations I ask you to make a decision, but do not let our temporary failure to arrive at a settlement act in any way as an excuse, valid or not, for postponing the hour of India's liberty.

My friend Dr. Ambedkar looks at me now and then with reproachful eyes. He says: Yes, but what are you going to do about the Depressed Classes? So many people not in any way connected with the Depressed Classes have already expressed anxiety for the Depressed Classes. Here and now let me tell my friend Dr. Ambedkar that I, the descendant of the proudest class of Brahmins in India, do not feel any reproach in his look. My duty has always been fulfilled in that regard, and not I only, but I speak in the name of all when I say that the leaders of the Hindu community should be and shall be pledged, whatever happens to the constitution of India's future, to remove this blot, to expiate the sins of disinheriting our ancestors for the dehumanising of one section of our own kith and kin. As far as it is possible for me and those who think like me it will be the first charge upon all our energies and our labours that every disability from which these tragic people suffer shall be removed and that they shall have a place in all things, social and political, equal to the highest who bear the label of the Vedic castes upon their brow. I will not stand for injustice or inequality to the poor and the depressed but I would say to Dr. Ambedkar that anyone who would serve the community that he represents would merely do a dis-service to them if he would strive to isolate them away behind electoral barriers as something outcaste from the assembly of those whose desire and duty it is to teach them the great

lesson of self-reliance and self-respect. In all else that matters, for all political purposes, for all human purposes I will challenge any Hindu in this gathering to deny them rights that are enjoyed by men of all other communities outside the Hindu pale.

What will you do, Mr. Prime Minister, to further this question of Federation? The Princes have spoken, the greater Princes have spoken. They have spoken, realising that they are Indians first and Princes afterwards. They have spoken realising that India must be one integral whole, indivisible in her destiny. I have spoken of Federation as the circumference of a circle, which has one centre, that unites all. From that centre each radius might go its own way, but all must be circumscribed by that circumference. I welcome with all my heart this idea of Federation. All my life I have been a dreamer of dreams of a Federated India that shall be free, each section having its own sovereign integrity, but yet bound one to the other by some focussing point of a common purpose and a common destiny. But when I hear that there are some who would like to see what rights are going to be guaranteed to them, what powers will be reserved to them to continue undesirable and obsolete methods of autocracy, who say that we must wait until they have made up their minds, I say and I repeat, and I will always say and reiterate that the youth of India will not wait upon the leisure of Princes. Not very long ago I said to my own Ruler, the Nizam of Hyderabad, "Sir, when the people begin to walk, Princes must begin to run to keep pace with them." The only security for the thrones of India lies in the hearts and the allegiance of the people. I believe that the Princes around this table have understood that ultimate security lies, not on a throne of gold, but in the hearts of the people, whom they rule. Therefore, I welcome their efforts and their desire to come into a Federation of a free India. But I should like to say, on behalf of the peoples of India, that we shall not be content with an alliance merely between dynasties and democracy, but that their people too shall have a voice in the councils of a free India.

I do not wish—I am not competent, for one thing—to make any criticism of the various aspects of the Federal Structure Report, but I feel that no constitution, however perfect in its technicalities, however beautifully dovetailed into each other its sections may be, merely on paper, can ever last for a single day, unless it is co-ordinated to the immediate and urgent issues of life as they exist in India to-day. To-day, the problem is a problem of hunger; to-day, the problem is the problem of a nation that has the shame to be defended by foreign forces; to-day, it is the humiliation of a country whose youth is dying of a broken heart because the young men and the young women of the other countries where they go to study are free and make friends with them, yet all the time they realise that they are amongst the disinherited ones, the exiles of earth, in their own country, because they have not the heritage of freedom which enables them to be masters of their own policies, not in one direction only, but in all the directions and departments of life.

My appeal to you, Mr. Prime Minister, is this. Make real that ideal, that desire, that dream of a statesman who was once a Viceroy, Lord Reading—equal partnership. How divergent are the ways by which men come to a common ideal! What two human beings could be more different than the Saint of Sabarmati and the *ex*-Viceroy of India; yet each of them use the same phrase—equal partnership. But are the implications alike in both minds?

I have sometimes been accused by those who are very ignorant or dense, or unimaginative—and there are so many in this country like that, Mr. Prime Minister—of being unfriendly to England. It is impossible for me to be unfriendly to England. So much of my youth has been spent in this country, and my friendships here are very real and spread over a very great number of years, more years than my vanity will permit me to tell you. My dreams for India have their roots deep down in my heart, but my friendships and associations with England have their roots intertwined with the roots of my dreams for India. Shall it be to-day that there must be so great a conflict between these two loyalties, that I must be compelled to eradicate one by its roots so that the other may live, or will you make it possible, by imagination, human understanding, sympathy, self-interest, if you will—will you make it possible for thousands of men and women like me who are patriots, but not narrow nationalists, who love their country and yet have known how to transcend all barriers of race, creed, civilisation and climate, who would die so that freedom might be born for their country, but who would not, if they could help it, make another nation suffer—no, not in its pocket, nor in its pride, nor in its life—will you make it possible for people like me to cherish such twin loyalties. You will only do it when you rise to the full heights of your own English traditions, those traditions that inspired my childhood when from my father's lips I learned how England had always been the sanctuary of those who were exiled from their country for the sake of their dream of liberty. Do not be content with the mere technicalities, the mere texts and letters of the constitution that you would give us, but be human in your vision and try to understand that even as you cherish liberty, so do we, a modern nation, cherish the dream of liberty. Do not drive us into being narrow nationalists when some of us by temperament, tradition and every conviction in our beings are internationalists, without undue sense of race and country. Make it possible to achieve that India, that free India, which will stand side by side with you with a bond of silk and not with a fetter of iron binding us to you.

I dream a dream, not of some far distant future, but of some immediate time when this will be possible; when you make bravely, spontaneously, that *beau geste* of abdication, for that is what lies at the root of our demand. When you have abdicated nobly your claim and title, when you have by your own abnegation of many imperialistic material interests risen to the height of your own spiritual greatness, stretch your hand in fellowship and we shall not be lacking in the response that bids you " Hail, but not farewell."

Sardar Sampuran Singh: Mr. Prime Minister, we are here together to evolve a democratic constitution for India. Democracy, after all, means equal treatment and equal opportunities for mankind. For bringing about those conditions it is absolutely necessary that there should be one kind of government over a large population. To bring about democratic constitutions in the world, I say with pleasure that you have achieved one thing; that is this, that you have built up a very large Empire on which you say with pride that the sun never sets. Having achieved that one great thing, now it is for you to consolidate it and to bring about co-operation and co-ordination of all the parts of that great Empire so as to make it really one organisation having stability and the power to progress further.

In this connection I may submit to you here that it is your duty to bring about such a government in India as will develop all the resources and the nationhood of that country, so that they may become strong in themselves and, subsequently and consequently, a source of strength to the whole Empire. In this connection at present, if I may be allowed to say so, you are governing it in such a way that the conditions are going every day from bad to worse. If in some quarters it is understood that in order to govern a place you have only to keep peace in that country, I would say that is wrong, and you can never achieve peace by the idea of achieving peace only, but that peace should be based on the psychology and the mentality of the people whom you govern.

People in India, if I may be allowed to say so, have, on account of the present state of things, lost faith in British justice. Long ago Lord Macaulay in one of his writings said that the foundation of the British Empire lies in the faith of the people whom you rule in your justice. I beg to submit that that foundation is not in its proper condition to-day; you have to repair it, you have to mend it, and, if necessary, you will have to put new parts into it. If you want the Empire really to develop and progress, this is my humble submission, that it is necessary that you should bring about that justice and that you should create faith in that justice amongst the people you want to keep within the British Empire. By the present methods you can never do that, so you must open new avenues and new constitutions by which you can bring that about. By your good luck, I would say, ever since you went to India the economic resources of that country developed, and the result was that the people became a little happier. Though the industries died, agriculture developed, but the present economic conditions of the world have brought the country—I mean India—into the lowest ebb. Agriculture (of which I can speak with experience, being an agriculturist myself) does not pay. People are sticking to that occupation simply because they have nothing else to do. They have been borrowing money, and now they cannot repay their creditors, neither have those few rich people any more money left to lend. That is all spent, gone in the way of the revenue and other charges on agricul-

ture, and to-day the whole nation is a nation of paupers, if I may be allowed to say so, except the gentlemen sitting on that side.

As I now speak of India I would submit that those conditions have to be altered. What are the remedies? Retrenchment and radical retrenchment is absolutely necessary. I fully appreciate and agree with my friend Captain Raja Sher Muhammad Khan that there should not be a reduction either in the way of numbers or in the way of efficiency in the Indian Army. I agree with him, but I would at the same time say that such a re-shuffling of the units should be made that in the place of the more expensive parts of the Army cheaper units should be put in. By this I mean that the Indian Army might be increased and the British Army might be reduced so as to make this retrenchment a little bit effective in that department as well. Perhaps I should have overlooked this question of the Army, but seeing that fifty per cent. of the revenues of the Government of India are absorbed by it, I do not think any effective retrenchment could be effected if one did not make it applicable to the Army as well. Again, Sir, in India, the question of exchange and the linking of the rupee with sterling is being taken very seriously. We have had some of our very best financiers present in London, and I was very glad to know that one or two meetings were held in the endeavour to come to some understanding or to convince them that this step which the Government of India had taken was absolutely necessary. I am sorry to say that neither any understanding nor any convictions have been brought about on that question. I would submit that the effort should not be given up. Either the British financiers should convince our men and make them understand that the measures they are taking are really the right ones or amongst themselves they should come to some understanding on the question, because I am sure that if some right understanding is arrived at it will have a very good effect on the whole of India.

I would like to say a word on the communal question as well. The communal question, in my opinion—I may be wrong—is more or less a subjective question. I live in a Province where Muhammadans are in a small majority, and I come from a class of people where some branches of a family are Muhammadans, some are Sikhs, and some are Hindus. Having lived in those villages and knowing those people so well I know that there is hardly any difference worth naming. So far as the economic interests of the people are concerned they go on with their professions and other things. The question of religion, which is more or less the root of this whole communal question, is a subjective question. It is only a question of bringing things into the right perspective. I think when that is done and when the people get an opportunity of handling their own affairs there will be no real difference amongst them. Communal differences will disappear automatically without any special efforts.

It has been said in certain quarters that the British politicians have gained a great point by putting the Indian Delegates in a wrong position on account of their not having come to any agree-

ment on the communal question. I do not believe it. I do not agree with it. I know it is wrong, because we are gathered here to bring about good relations between two great nations, and we are gathered here to bring about good government in India which will satisfy the people of India without doing any harm to the British nation. For that end are we met, and that end we have always in view, and to put either party in the wrong—if we were to do it to England, or if the British politicians were to do it to us—would not help in the solution of that problem, and no statesman worthy of the name would do it, and I do not think it was ever meant.

Continuing this idea, I should like to say one thing, namely that it is absolutely necessary that the people of India should be satisfied that the British Government really means business. If it is not done immediately things will go from bad to worse, and we get into a vicious circle. When Government wants the help of its subordinate officials in the districts and in the villages to curb all these disturbances, the result is that the authorities have to be lenient towards the subordinate staffs of the various departments, and these staffs expect certain favours, which always take the form of curruption. These people become corrupt, and the authorities, being to a certain extent under an obligation to them, cannot handle them as they should. That is one of the chief reasons why people in India are losing their faith in the present Government.

Something has to be done, therefore, as otherwise, however mighty the British may be, and certainly they can exercise any amount of repression to keep the people quiet, they will not be able to re-establish that faith in British justice in the hearts of Indians. It can be done to-day, but it will be difficult to do so after some years. I am not thinking about bringing about good government and peace in India; I am thinking of establishing once again in India that faith in British justice which is the sole foundation on which in my opinion the Empire can be durably built.

I am a born optimist, and I have not lost my faith. I still look forward to the day when India will attain to her greatness and will work out her destiny within the British Empire, and the British Empire, with India and Dominions, will progress and go forward, until a day may come when people will have so much faith in British justice that other great countries will voluntarily come into this Empire, but it is difficult to say whether in those days it will be called British Empire or something else. Perhaps we may have one Government for the whole of the world. Some day it may be said to the honour of Britain and India—two countries very different from each other—that they by acting as partners in a great Empire laid the foundation for one democratic government for the whole world.

(The Conference adjourned at 1-15 p.m. and resumed at 2-30 p.m.)

H.H. The Maharao of Cutch: Prime Minister and gentlemen, during the last few days I have listened with pleasure and respect to the speeches of many eminent persons who have been intimately

associated with the work of this Conference in general and of the Federal Structure Committee in particular since its inception. In the few remarks which I shall now make I shall not attempt to cover the ground surveyed by them. My contribution to this discussion will be made from the relatively detached standpoint of one who was not a member of the Round Table Conference during its previous Session and who has not been a member of the Federal Structure Committee during the present Session. For this reason perhaps what I have to say may be of interest.

We of the Indian States have sometimes been accused of vacillation in our attitude towards the project of Federation; we have been accused of not knowing our own minds, of hesitating and of being over-cautious. May I ask, is this accusation quite justified? I would ask you to remember that when the Chamber of Princes met in 1930—which, after all, was only eighteen months ago—the project of Federation in its present form was not under consideration at all. The Delegates representing the Indian States at the First Session of the Round Table Conference were selected by His Excellency the Viceroy; and, although the Standing Committee of the Chamber of Princes was consulted in regard to those representatives, the Chamber of Princes itself had no opportunity to confer upon them any mandate. Thus it was that from the standpoint of the majority of the members of the Chamber of Princes, Federation in the sense in which it is now understood came into the field of practical politics between the 1930 and the 1931 Sessions.

Our representatives in the First Session of the Round Table Conference, out of a patriotic desire to promote the interests of India, agreed for their own part to take an active share in the promotion of the scheme of Federation, subject to the safeguards necessary for the maintenance of the sovereignty, the integrity and the security of the Indian States. But, while all the opinions pronounced in the First Session of the Round Table Conference by the representatives of Indian opinion there gathered were provisional, the opinions of the representatives of the Indian Princes were provisional in a special degree, being subject to confirmation not only by the States individually but also by the States collectively at the meeting of the Chamber of Princes.

When the Chamber met early in the present year it was hardly to be expected that the rapid developments which had taken place in India would be received with entire equanimity. Many of the members of the Chamber were doubtful as to whether Federation was practical in the form proposed. Some were apprehensive of it, yet others reserving their opinion; and I think it is a distinct tribute to the patriotism and good sense of the Chamber of Princes that, although its members had to make up their minds in a very short period of time, there was unanimity when they authorised the continuance of the endeavours to find a satisfactory solution of the federal project. Thus it came about that it was only this year that the Chamber of Princes gave their provisional assent to the idea of

Federation. At that time, however, it was an idea only; no details had been worked out, and the picture which was presented was in its bare outline. As the result of the work which has been done in London during the last three months the picture of the future Federation, though still incomplete in certain aspects, has become plainer and more intelligible. It will therefore be easier for the Indian States who come in to examine it both individually and collectively, to make up their minds about it and to pronounce more definite opinions regarding the scheme.

I do not desire, nor do I think this is the place or the occasion, to examine in detail arguments that could be advanced for and against federation. I would only say this, that my experience of men and things, derived from my forty-seven years as Ruler of an Indian State, has made me careful of committing myself to general propositions before I fully realise their particular implications. Accordingly, as I am free to admit, I have examined the project of federation with considerable caution; but, after carefully weighing the considerations which present themselves to my mind, I have come to the conclusion that the idea of federation has merits which highly deserve careful and sympathetic consideration from every individual here.

The right method of entry into federation we have still to determine, and some Princes will perhaps, I think, look with some sort of favour upon some sort of antecedent confederation idea. However, I have observed with great satisfaction that from the very commencement of the Sessions of this Conference His Majesty's Government has made it perfectly plain not only that every reasonable precaution will be taken to safeguard the rights and interests of the Indian States and of their people, but also that no pressure can or will be brought on the States, either individually or collectively, to force their assent to any scheme of which they do not approve.

As an illustration of this general attitude of His Majesty's Government, which I am sure will inspire confidence amongst the States, I would draw attention to the fact that the special position of the Maritime States, of which Cutch is one, has not escaped attention. The decision which we of the Maritime States will shortly be called upon to take is of an importance not confined to ourselves alone, for our non-entry into Federation would raise fiscal and financial difficulties, I am afraid, of no common order. Plainly, however, we cannot be expected to enter into Federation until we know clearly where we stand. Certain of our rights are at the moment matters of dispute between the Government of India and ourselves, and for this reason I welcome the recommendation, in paragraph 20 of the Report of the Federal Finance sub-Committee, that any decision as to what are the existing rights of a State in those instances in which they are now in dispute shall be determined separately with the least possible delay. With this recommendation I am in entire agreement, only postulating that the determination of disputed rights shall be undertaken by an impartial body. Indeed, I think it is very necessary

that, whether Federation comes about or not, the economic and political disabilities of which the States have long been complaining should be effectively removed.

I draw attention to this point here because I believe that such an attitude as that which I have just illustrated on the part of the British Government will play an important part in inducing the States individually and collectively to co-operate wholeheartedly in the building up of a greater India. For the same reason I would suggest the desirability of meeting so far as is reasonably possible the point of view put forward by my brother representatives of the Indian States on the subjects discussed during the sittings of the Federal Structure Committee. It will encourage the States to join the Federation if the generally expressed wish for a fifty per cent. representation in the Upper Chamber and in any case for one hundred and twenty-five seats therein can be gratified. If the States are assured that there will be no direct taxation of their subjects by the Federal Government, if pending questions like cash and other contributions are dealt with promptly and satisfactorily, if the Federal Court is confined to federal functions, and if any alteration of its functions or of the character of that Court stand in the category of an amendment of the constitution, if generally the States are made to feel that their feelings are respected and their sovereignty respected and their rights recognised, then all will be well.

Let me finally say that we of the Indian States, enjoying as we do a unique relationship with the British Crown, are certainly no less anxious than the leaders of British India that India should as a whole progress peacefully and in prosperity within the British Commonwealth. We have from time to time made declarations as unqualified and equally as unequivocal of our determination to adhere to the British connection. By that connection we are prepared to stand or to fall. But as true friends of Britain as well as true friends of India we are witnessing with grave concern the feelings of tension which exist at the present day in British India. Speaking for myself, speaking as a Delegate to the Round Table Conference, speaking as a member of an Order which has on many occasions given practical proof of their attachment to the British connection, and last but not least, speaking as an Indian, I will venture to say that I think it is important on every ground that this tension should be eased.

The promises which have been given to India during the war and after both by prominent statesmen of His Majesty's Government and by His Majesty's representatives in India have roused high hopes and expectations which must not be disappointed. The performance of these promises must go forward steadily towards complete execution. So, and so only, will the building of that greater India upon which we are now engaged progress steadily towards completion. If those promises are not performed I, for one, am afraid to think of the consequences which may follow. I am confident,

Mr. Prime Minister, that the Government over which you preside will give us all a lead which we can follow.

Dr. Moonje: Sir, I should first like to speak on a few minor points which concern me before I say what I have to say on the constitutional issue.

Referring to paragraphs 22 and 23 of the Third Report of the Federal Structure Committee, I have to say that the seats assigned to my Province are very few comparatively. They have been assigned seven and twelve seats respectively for the Upper and Lower Chamber. The population of the Central Provinces and Berar is fifteen millions odd, and that of Bombay and the Punjab is twenty-one and twenty-three millions respectively; that is hardly half as much more than that of the Central Provinces and Berar. Bombay and the Punjab get as many as seventeen seats each, that is, two and a half times more than Central Provinces and Berar. On the other hand, the North-West Frontier Province gets two and three seats in the Upper and Lower Chambers respectively, though its population is only two million odd. If we see the area of Bihar and Orissa, it is 83,161 square miles. My Province is 99,876 square miles. If we look at the revenues of Bihar and my Province, Bihar has a revenue of Rs. 5,78,22,212 and my Province has Rs. 5,35,87,994, very little difference, and yet Bihar gets seventeen seats and my Province is only given seven and twelve respectively. We have, therefore, to bring this matter to the notice of the Federal Structure Committee, and I hope by comparison it will not be an exaggeration for me to say that my Province will not be satisfied if anything less than ten and fifteen seats for the Upper and Lower Chamber respectively are given to it. It may appear from the general point of view a very minor point, but from the local and Provincial point of view my people are going to attach very great importance to this point, and I hope this point will be borne in mind by the Federal Structure Committee.

Then I have got to say a few words upon another minor point, that is, the fundamental rights of the subjects of Indian States. No provision appears to have been made for the defining and protection of the fundamental rights of Indian States subjects. It has an importance specially its own at the present moment. I do not in this House require reminding as to what is happening in Kashmir. The people of Kashmir feel a grievance about their rights and privileges; it may be right, it may be wrong, but anyway they feel a grievance and the grievance is so keenly felt that they have gone to the extent of taking the law into their own hands. It is not a question which is confined only to Kashmir.

It is a question of the fundamental rights of the people of the States; and from that point of view if an investigation were to be made, the condition of the people in other States would not be found to be in any way better and perhaps in some States worse. Therefore it has to be looked at from the all-India point of view with regard to the protection, with regard to the defining and protection, of the fundamental rights of the Indian States subject.

We certainly ought to owe a deep debt of gratitude to the leaders of my Mussulman brothers for having shown the way to the people of Kashmir as to how to fight for their rights and for the establishment of their rights, and how to bring their grievances to the notice of the Government. But at the same time it must be understood, and this caution must be taken, that the method does not become contagious; that people of other States do not feel impelled, if protection is not given to them, to take the law into their own hands in order to assert their fundamental rights.

Therefore, from this point of view—and it is a very important point of view because it involves the peace and prosperity of the whole of India—provision should be made in the constitution for defining the fundamental rights of the States subject and for proper and necessary safeguards.

I may now speak a few words about the minorities. There is not much I have to say, because whatever I have to say I have said in the statements I have handed in for incorporation in the Report of the Committee. But I wish to give a caution in the words of an admirable article that has appeared in the London *Times* a few days ago on the minorities of Iraq. That article says:—

> "The terms in which the Council of the League of Nations will advise the Assembly"—

that is the Assembly of the League of Nations—

> "to accept Iraq as a member of the League will probably be formulated next year."

India is already a member of the League.

> "There is every reason to hope that King Feisal's Government will then accept and implement all reasonable safeguards for the minorities; but in this connection it is necessary to warn their champions, and more particularly the friends of the Christian minorities, against excessive claims on behalf of their communities. They demand and deserve guarantees,"— to what extent?—"of impartial justice and religious liberty; but they will not prosper if they are encouraged to magnify their differences from and to minimise their points of contract with their neighbours. Nor will they attain political maturity any the sooner for being spoon-fed by benevolent Europeans. Over-solicitude may be as injurious as neglect to communities as well as to children."

I am convinced that this salutary caution is as needful in our case as it is found to be in the case of Iraq, and I hope this point and this aspect of the question will be borne in mind.

I may say a few words about the Minorities Pact. The mainstay of the Minorities Pact is the so-called Depressed Classes. Unfortunately or fortunately, rightly or wrongly, from the history of ages past, Hindu society has had its culture on the face of this earth. One of the prominent features of that culture is the caste system; and if every little caste is to be regarded as a separate

entity for recognition and for representation in the Legislature, I do not know where we will go. As far as the Depressed Classes are concerned, it is very difficult for an unstable and quickly vanishing quantity to be computed in fixed permanent numbers. The Congress and the Hindu Mahasabha on one side and the Arya Samaj and the Social Reforms on the other are carrying on intense propaganda for the removal of untouchability. Perhaps the Report of the Simon Commission itself on the question of untouchability is out of date in view of the present day conditions of India. Even as regards temple entry the situation has improved vastly as compared with what it was during the time of the Simon Commission. I therefore think it will be unwise and not statesmanlike, and certainly a positive disservice to the Depressed Classes, to give occasion for creating a vested interest in the Depressed Classes and stereotyping the difference. Therefore, from that point of view the question ought to be looked at with a view to seeing that the ultimate object is not to stereotype the Depressed Classes, but that untouchability and the Depressed Classes may disappear. So far as the line of argument I am taking is concerned, and from the aspect from which I am looking at the problem, it will be no exaggeration to say that the political interests of the Depressed Classes are not in any way separate from those of the general body of the Hindus.

As for the Christians, admittedly there is no unanimity amongst them as regards separate electorates. There is my friend, Dr. Datta, who has expressed his opinion. Last year the late Mr. Paul, whose place is ably filled by Dr. Datta this time, also expressed his opinion that the Christian community as a whole is not wedded to separate electorates. I personally have attended several conferences of all minorities, and particularly the All-Minorities Conference in Lahore recently, which was presided over by a very respected and influential leader of the Christian community; and there was no talk of separate electorates in that Conference. Therefore, so far as the question of the nature of electorates is concerned, this pact, which has been based on separate electorates, should not be taken very seriously.

So far as the British residents in India are concerned, they are also demanding separate electorates through their representatives here, but I hope my friends here have been reading what the newspapers have been saying on the subject as carefully as I have been. There have appeared in the London *Times* letters by the younger section, as it is called, of British residents in India, and they have been as clear and unequivocal in their condemnation of separate electorates as they could be. I shall quote only one letter as a sample, which will prove that even the demand of the representatives of the British residents in India at this Conference cannot be taken very literally to mean that they must have separate electorates and that they cannot do without them. The letter which I propose to read is published over the signatures of ten well known missionaries who are conducting nation-building activities in different parts of India. I am glad and proud to say

that one of them is Mr. Hoyland, who was a Professor in the Missionary College in Nagpur, where I received my education. The letter dated 23rd November, 1931, is as follows:—

Europeans in India.

> Sir, With reference to the present discussions concerning the political rights of Europeans in India, speaking for ourselves as missionaries on furlough in this country, and expressing the mind, as we believe, of most of our colleagues in India, we wish to make clear that the missionaries desire no special political privileges as Europeans in India.

I wish my friends who represent the British residents in India here, with such powerful influences behind them, would be generous enough to say that for the sake of the general welfare of India, they would give up, with generosity and goodwill, their demand for separate electorates. I need not read the names of the signatories to that letter; I shall hand them over to the office for incorporation into the Report.

It will be seen, therefore, that if we examine the Minorities Pact we shall find that with the possible exception of the Mussulmans the claim of the other minorities for separate electorates is not indisputable.

Sir Henry Gidney: Question!

Dr. Moonje: As for the Mussulmans, last year I sounded a note in one of my speeches before the Conference that even the Mussulmans might not be unanimous in their demand for separate electorates. That was only an intimation which came to me at that time.

Mr. Fazul-ul-Huq: Question!

Dr. Moonje: I have a right to speak and you have a right to question. At that time I had only an intimation; I had no proof at that time which I could bring forward with the assurance of at least appealing to the commonsense and reason of reasonable men.

Mr. Fazl-ul-Huq: Now is there confirmation?

Dr. Moonje: Now it is already well known to the world that there are two sections among the Mussulmans, one section which will not be content with anything less than separate electorates, while another section is agitating and struggling in India for joint electorates.

It will be no exaggeration—I do not want to exaggerate—it will be no exaggeration for me to say that that section is not insignificant. On the other hand, it aspires to prove to the world in competition with other sections that if a general referendum of the community be taken joint electorates would be the general wish and not separate electorates. That is their ambition. Therefore, so far as the question of joint or separate electorates is concerned and so far as it concerns the several members of the minorities representation who have formed themselves into the Minorities

Pact, it could not be said that their demand for separate electorates is indisputable. Beyond that I will not go.

Having said these few words about certain minor points I have now to say what I want to say about the constitutional issues. It has been said—at least I understand it in that way—that the work of the Federal Structure Committee cannot proceed to its legitimate end, that is defining and bringing about a constitution based upon Dominion Status and full responsible government, because of two obstacles, which perhaps are regarded as insurmountable. The first obstacle is that the Princes are not prepared to come into federation, though we are grateful to some of them—and they are very important Princes—who have expressed their willingness to come into federation immediately. But anyway it is said, or at least one is given to understand, that the Princes as a body have not at present made up their minds to come into federation. That is one insuperable, that is one insurmountable obstacle, we are told. The second obstacle is that the minorities problem has not been solved. I will take the first obstacle first, that is whether the Princes are willing to come into federation or are not willing to come into federation. Looking at the matter from the British-India point of view, I want to know whether, when this Conference was conceived and was convened, the point was all-India Federation or only Dominion Status and full responsible government for British India. So far as I have been able to find out by investigating into the history of the matter, when this Round Table Conference was first conceived there was no question of Federation. Federation was regarded at that time as a dim, hazy ideal on the horizon of the ultimate goal of constitutional union between Indian India and British India. The Federation of all-India was something to be realised hereafter, but was not a question of practical politics at the time. What greater authority can I quote than Lord Irwin, the then Viceroy of India, a man of great Christian virtues, a man of manly statesmanship? That Lord Irwin, that Viceroy, saw through the mistake that the British Cabinet committed here of appointing a commission called the Simon Commission which was not approved of by anybody that counted in India, and which was boycotted by everybody in India. (*Several Delegates:* "No, No.") I am glad to see there are some people who have the courage to say they did not boycott it. (*A Delegate:* "They did not.") I see some people who still have not the courage to say they did not boycott it. Therefore, if not the whole of India, at any rate the greater part of India boycotted it. (*Several Delegates:* "No.") I say, therefore, that any constitution made by the Simon Commission or by a Royal Commission or by any other Commission, any constitution that may be provided without the co-operation and consent of the people of India is not likely to work. It is said that a man who has burnt his lips by drinking hot milk always tries to blow over even cold whey before drinking it. Lord Irwin in his manly statesmanship thought this will not do, and he brought about this Conference. And how did he bring about this Round Table Conference and

with what idea did he bring about the Round Table Conference? In that is involved the germ of what we are expected to bring about in this Round Table Conference. In his statement of the 31st October, 1929, Lord Irwin says:—

> "But what must constantly engage our attention and is a matter of deep concern to His Majesty's Government is the discovery of means by which, when the Commission has reported, the broad question of British Indian constitutional advance may be approached in co-operation with those who can speak authoritatively."

The broad question of British Indian constitutional advance has to be considered after the Simon Commission has reported. There is no mention here of the Indian States, of the Indian Federation. Later on he says:—

> "As I recently pointed out, my own Instrument of Instruction from the King-Emperor expressly states His Majesty's will and pleasure that the plans laid by Parliament in 1919 should be the means by which British India may obtain its due place among the Dominions."

There could be no clearer, no more emphatic declaration that the ultimate object of this Conference is the evolution of a constitution for British India whether the States may come in or whether the States may not come in. When I say so, I do not desire to be misunderstood. I am not against the Federation; I am not for wasting all that work that has been done up to now. I shall welcome them—I honestly and sincerely say that I will welcome them, the Princes, with both of my hands, when they come to the Federation, but what I say is this that if the Princes do not make up their minds and cannot make up their minds for certain reasons of their own to come into the Federation immediately, that ought not to be made an obstacle in the way of the evolution of a constitution for British India, because it will go counter to the pledges given by the Viceroy in his statement, and I do not wish that the British Cabinet may give one more instance to the people of India to say that here a clear pledge has been violated by the British Cabinet a second time.

The Viceroy goes on further and says:—

> "I am authorised on behalf of His Majesty's Government to state clearly that in their judgment it is implicit in the declaration of 1917 that the natural issue of India's constitutional progress as there contemplated is attainment of Dominion Status."

Therefore it is perfectly clear, as clear as daylight, that if this logic is to be taken into consideration the ultimate object of the discussions of this Conference is to evolve a constitution for British India irrespective of whether the Princes come in or do not come in. And further on Lord Irwin says: "In the full realisation of this policy" that is the declaration of 1917 in which the grant of

Dominion Status to British India is implicit—" in the full realisation of this policy it is evidently important "—look at the language—" it is evidently important that the Indian States shall be afforded an opportunity of finding their place ". I am quite prepared to give them full opportunity to find out their place in my house, the constitution of British India, and when we shall build up the British India we shall leave what the architect called the lines of extension in the walls so that when the Princes will come in the thing will be automatically expanded to accommodate them. Lord Irwin says:—

> " In the full realisation of this policy it is evidently important that the Indian States should be afforded an opportunity of finding their place, and even if we cannot at present exactly foresee—."

At the time when the Declaration of 1917 was made, when the Declaration of 1919 was made, and when the meaning of that Declaration was expressly stated to be Dominion Status and full responsible government for British India—even at that time Lord Irwin could not see the possibility of immediately bringing the Princes into the Federation of India. Therefore, my point is, that we should not allow the inconveniences, the natural difficulties, the hesitations of the Princes to come into the Federation immediately, to be an obstacle in the way of the consummation of our Federation of British India.

Lord Irwin says:—

> " —that Indian States should be afforded an opportunity of finding their place, and even if we cannot at present exactly foresee on what lines this development may be shaped, it is from every point of view desirable that whatever can be done should be done to ensure that action taken now is not inconsistent with the attainment of the ultimate purpose which those, whether in British India or the States, who look forward to some kind of unity of all-India have in view."

Therefore, I say if the constitution for British India be evolved, and if it be the pleasure of the British Government to grant us Dominion Status and full responsible Government, it will not be inconsistent with the ultimate idea of a Federation of the whole of India which the Princes can come into at their pleasure and at their convenience, and with their difficulties solved.

Yesterday, my friend, Sir Manubhai Mehta, I think, made it quite clear that it will be easier for the States to federate with a British India having full Dominion Status and full responsible government than with a British India without those qualifications. I have understood him to mean that, and I hope I have understood him rightly.

Now, I should like to know what is the meaning of Dominion Status. The meaning of Dominion Status may be different in the

minds of different people; but, as Lord Irwin has said, any constitution to which the people of India will not consent will not work in India. Therefore, the question as to what people think is the meaning of Dominion Status acquires importance.

I am now here speaking as a representative of the Hindu Mahasabha, which is an organised body, a well-disciplined body next only to the Congress. As its working President I have been given a mandate by the Hindu Mahasabha to say what meaning it attaches to Dominion Status. I have been told that it should be regarded as my duty to take this opportunity of informing the British Government and British people as to what the idea of the Hindu Mahasabha is as to Dominion Status and full responsible government. The Hindu Mahasabha held its annual session in August, before I left India, and certain resolutions were adopted. The mandate that is given to me is based upon those resolutions, it has given me a mandate, based on these resolutions, to inform the British Government and the British people:—

(1) that the people of India are in no mood to be satisfied with anything less than immediate Dominion Status and full responsible government. The status connotes to them control of the Army, foreign relations, finance, and fiscal policy;

(2) that the Mahasabha, while believing that the people of India are capable of taking immediate charge of this control, is prepared to agree, as a matter of compromise and accommodation between the British and Indian interests, to a period of transition, during which this control may pass gradually from the hands of the British to the hands of Indian people;

(3) that this period of transition need not be more than from ten to fifteen years;

(4) that during this period of transition the Ministers in charge of these Departments be appointed by the Viceroy and be responsible to him and not to the Legislature; but they should be chosen from amongst the elected Indian members of the Indian Legislature, so that the period of transition may be utilised by Indians for learning the art of this control;

(5) that henceforth annual recruitment for commissioned officers in the Army be made from among the people of India, subject to the standard of efficiency which is applicable to the British officers, provided that it may be open to the Government to recruit in England to fill up such of the vacancies as may not be filled up in India;

(6) that the bar that exists against recruitment in the Army of certain classes and castes based on the artificial distinction as belonging to the so-called martial and non-martial classes be done away with immediately, and the ranks of the Army be thrown open to all ranks and classes,

subject, of course, to the test of efficiency, so that the Army may be made truly national.

It is a great pity that the Defence sub-Committee, which did such good work last year, was not convened this year. It is a great pity. I do not want to say so, but it is really a matter of great grievance to us that the Defence sub-Committee was not convened. The Defence sub-Committee made recommendations for the appointment of two Expert Committees. One of the Expert Committees was appointed by the Government of India, and I had the honour to serve on that Committee. That Expert Committee has made its Report, and in the natural course it was expected that that Report would come up for consideration before this Defence sub-Committee of the Round Table Conference. I do not know why, but that Committee was not convened. It is my duty, however, to inform the British people and to inform the British Cabinet what the feelings of the people of India are in respect of the majority recommendations of that Expert Committee.

I will not take much time over it, but, in one word, I will say that the people of India regard the recommendations of the majority of the Expert Committee, from which the majority of the non-official members of the Committee have dissociated themselves, as nothing short of a breach of faith, judging from the spirit that was prevailing in the discussions last year of the Defence sub-Committee. I have made this point very clear in my note of dissent attached to the Report of the Committee, and I think, and my people in India have told me, that it should be my duty to inform the British people and the British Government that the recommendations of the majority Report of that Expert Committee are not looked upon by the people as anything short of a breach of faith.

I will mention only two instances. The first is the intake and the inordinately high proportion of nominations that have been fixed. This is a vital point with Indians, and therefore I may be excused if I use a little strong language in this matter. The annual intake for the college has been fixed at sixty by the Government. and out of these sixty as many as thirty-six have been reserved for nomination by the Commander-in-Chief. I have argued in my note of dissent that it was the inherent right, acting under the resolutions of the Defence sub-Committee, of that Expert Committee to decide what should be the intake of that college. The Government of India had no status except that of an agent carrying out the resolutions of the Defence sub-Committee. Unfortunately, however, they thought otherwise. They decided otherwise. They decided that only sixty cadets should be admitted into the college and no more than that.

The people of India think—I am using strong language again—that what appeared to be given to them in the resolutions and recommendations of the Defence sub-Committee has been given, as it were, with the right hand, and the left hand which exists in

India has taken away all of it, or most of it. It is this feeling of distrust, it is this feeling of want of confidence, it is this feeling of grievance which rankles in the hearts of the people, that on the vital question of defence the position has been tampered with in a way not authorised or sanctioned by the Defence sub-Committee. Thus the non-calling of the Defence sub-Committee assumes an importance of its own and does not contribute to the re-habilitation of trust in the Government.

It is a great pity the Defence sub-Committee was not convened. I took the precaution, thinking that the matter might have been forgotten, of writing to the Secretary of State for India and requesting that early steps be taken for convening a meeting of the Defence sub-Committee, but unfortunately he did not find it convenient or possible to convene a meeting of the Defence sub-Committee. He has needlessly given cause for a grievance which is rankling in our hearts.

As for the second obstacle, the minorities obstacle, it has been said that the Federal Structure Committee could not complete its work because of the obstacle presented by the fact that the minorities problem had not been solved.

The minorities problem has not been solved by agreement. There is no use denying that. But there is also the consciousness—at least in my mind, and I hope that that consciousness will sink into the minds of the other parties—that if full Dominion Status and full responsible government as mentioned above are given to India by the British Government the solution of the minorities problem by mutual agreement will follow easily. The parties will then see what they stand to gain or what they stand to lose if they come to an agreement or if they do not come to an agreement. They will know then that they are standing on their own feet and they will see what they will lose if they do not come to an agreement. In those circumstances what appears at the present time to be an insuperable difficulty will immediately disappear. There is a consciousness in my mind that if responsible government was assured to us by the British Government it would not take more than twenty-four hours to come to an agreement on the minorities problem.

But supposing we did not still come to an agreement, the position still would not be hopeless. I am not hopelessly daunted by the problem. There have been minorities problems in the world before now, and we have got the League of Nations established, one of the main purposes of which is to prevent minorities problems becoming a menace to the peace and progress of the world. Why should we not apply to the League of Nations, and ask them to deal with our minorities problem as they are dealing with the minorities problems of the nations of Europe and the entire world? If I myself were in the Government I should think a hundred times before taking the responsibility of deciding the minorities problem myself, because of the inevitability that one party or the other or perhaps both parties might be dissatisfied, and as such the Govern-

ment would have the odium of not having decided the question rightly. But if a third party like the League of Nations, which was brought into being for this very purpose and has made this work a very speciality of its own, gives a decision on the communal problem of India, the hands of the Government of India will be strengthened in forcing that decision on the people because it will have come from an impartial body. That is not merely my own opinion. I stand in company with greater persons. It should be noted that no less a person than the British Foreign Secretary, Mr. Arthur Henderson, presiding at a meeting of the Council of the League of Nations in January last after an amicable settlement of the questions at issue had been reached between representatives of the German and Polish Governments, emphasised that "the system of the protection of minorities inaugurated by the League of Nations was now a part of the public life of Europe and of the world". That is the opinion of no less a person than the British Foreign Secretary. Other persons also from amongst the British Delegation have expressed the opinion that really if it comes to that they will have no objection to handing over the problem for solution to the League of Nations. Therefore, it cannot be said that it must be taken as an insuperable obstacle in the way of the evolution of a constitution for India. Besides there has been a proposal from Mahatma Gandhi and others that the matter should be handed over to a judicial tribunal for impartial arbitration. The point I want to make is that the minorities problem cannot be taken as an insuperable obstacle in the way of the evolution of a constitution for India.

I am not in the habit of making sentimental appeals because my temperament is quite otherwise, but now I am going to make an appeal in my own way. I come now to pour out my heart before the British people and the British Cabinet. Perhaps the time has come in the history of the relations between India and England which can be compared with the time that was, about one hundred years ago, between America and England.

On one point let there be no misunderstanding: the people of India are determined to have their Dominion Status. They will fight to the end for that purpose. On that point let there be no misunderstanding. The people of India even to-day have no hatred for the British race. They feel that up to now the British people have done well, and they still hope they will come down to accept what we are demanding at the present moment, but let it not be five minutes too late because that will take away all the grace from the act. I hope and wish that the British Cabinet at the present moment will take time by the forelock. I hope they will remember their history and not repeat the mistake again.

With these few words I close my speech.

Rao Bahadur Srinivasan: Prime Minister, I am thankful to you for giving me this opportunity to take part in these deliberations. This is the first time I am rising to speak and I believe it will be the last. The cause of the Depressed Classes has received

very little sympathy in this Conference. In some quarters it has evoked armed neutrality. In others armed hostility. In view of this may I crave your indulgence for a full statement of the position of myself and my colleague, Dr. Ambedkar?

The demands of the Depressed Classes have been formulated by us in two separate memoranda which we have submitted to the Conference. Our principal demand is for special representation through separate electorates. Permit me to say that ours is a demand which is not only just, but which is accepted to be reasonable by others besides ourselves. Take our demand for special representation. Ever since the declaration of August 20, 1917, made self-government as the basic ideal of British policy in India, special representation for the Depressed Classes has been accepted as a condition of political advance in India. In the Montagu-Chelmsford Report this claim of the Depressed Classes has found ample recognition, as a result of which the Depressed Classes have been enjoying special representation in the Provincial and Central Legislatures. Three years after, in 1923, the Muddiman Committee examined the working of the constitution framed in consonance with the Montagu-Chelmsford Report. It not only endorsed the system of special representation of the Depressed Classes but recommended an increase in the extent of representation granted to them. The Muddiman Committee was followed by the Simon Commission. That Commission not only upheld the principle of special representation for the Depressed Classes but gave it much larger recognition than it had ever received before. Lest it should be assumed that the Simon Commission being entirely British in its composition deliberately planned this blow at the Hindu ascendancy, let me point out that the Simon Commission was assisted by various bodies which were overwhelmingly Hindu in their composition. There were first of all the Provincial Governments which submitted to the Simon Commission descriptive memoranda and concrete proposals for political reform. Secondly there were Provincial Simon Committees constituted from Provincial Legislatures and the Indian Central Committee which submitted proposals for the future constitution of India. All these Central and Provincial Committees which worked with the Simon Committee agreed that there must be special representation for the Depressed Classes. The matter does not end there. We have had circulated to this Conference the Despatches of the Provincial Governments and of the Government of India reviewing the proposals of the Simon Commission. Is there any Government Provincial, or Central, which has dissented from the recommendation of the Simon Commission in the matter of the special representation of the Depressed Classes? Let me take the demand of the Depressed Classes for *separate electorates*. This demand is looked upon as an extraordinary demand. We are told that we are part and parcel of the Hindu community and that separate electorates would cause a severance between the two. With due respect to those who advance this argument I must say that we fail to see its force. The Depressed Classes live a completely isolated life

from the rest of the Hindus. The Hindu priest will not officiate at the house of an untouchable; and will not allow him to enter his temple. The Hindu barber will not shave him. The Hindu washerman will not wash his clothes. The Hindu will not eat with him much less intermarry with him. We can conceive no greater social separation between any two communities than that which exists between the touchable and untouchable Hindu. Consequently it is not a case where we need follow the Biblical admonition which says " Whom God hath joined together let no man put asunder ". It is a case of recognising the separation that in fact exists. Another consideration urged against separate electorates is that they will perpetuate the difference. This again we are unable to follow. No one will be conscious of separate electorates except on the polling day which will come once in five years. What is it that can prevent our Hindu friends from working for the rest of their days to establish social intercourse between touchables and untouchables and thereby help to abolish untouchability?

What we say is, however, that the question of electorates for the Depressed Classes is not to be looked at from the point of view of what effect it will have upon the Hindu religion or upon Hindu society; it has to be looked at from one point of view, namely, what sort of electorate will give the Depressed Classes real representation. It will no doubt be said that the Simon Commission recommended joint electorates and reserved seats for the Depressed Classes, but to say this is, in our opinion, to misunderstand the Simon Commission, for the Simon Commission did not recommend joint electorates pure and simple; it recommended joint electorates with a system of certified candidates.

The reason why the Simon Commission recommended the system of certified candidates is just the reason why the Depressed Classes want separate electorates, namely, that in joint electorates pure and simple the representatives of the Depressed Classes would in all probability be the nominees of the caste Hindus, which would be defeating the whole purpose of their representation.

The Depressed Classes have condemned the recommendations of the Simon Commission both on the ground that certification of the candidates deprives the electorate of their rights to choose their representatives, and also on the ground that the Governor who has to certify may not always be an Englishman and, if he happens to be a Hindu, may use this power of certification in the interests of a party instead of in the interests of the Depressed Classes.

That the Depressed Classes want separate electorates pure and simple for some time to come, and that they would never consent to accept joint electorates until there was adult suffrage, is abundantly made clear by the telegrams we have circulated to members of this Conference, and those who wish for additional evidence on this point may be referred to the Despatch of the Government of India on the Simon Report.

We take our stand on the proposition that in the matter of minority protection the wishes of the minority should prevail; but let it not be supposed that the demand for the Depressed Classes for separate electorates has no support from other quarters. It has in fact received support from very high and quite unexpected quarters. Three Provincial Governments have objected to the Simon Commission's recommendation of joint electorates and certified candidates for the Depressed Classes and have recommended separate electorates. They are the Government of Bombay, the Government of Madras, and the Government of the United Provinces. The Government of the United Provinces has put the case so well that I am tempted to quote the following passage from its despatch :—

> " The Commission themselves admit that separate electorates are more likely to secure the return of an adequate number of persons who enjoy the confidence of the Depressed Classes. That admission suggests the vital objection to their proposal, namely, that in the general non-Muslim constituencies the Depressed Class voters will be far outnumbered by the other voters and the members returned will be those who are supported by the majority of voters, as distinct from the Depressed Class voters. The Commission's proposal will not in fact give the Depressed Classes members who will be trusted by them to represent their special interests. The alternative is separate electorates. These no doubt have their own disadvantages, but if the initial difficulty of creating an electorate can be overcome, this Government consider that these classes should not, on a purely theoretical ground, be denied a privilege which has already been given to Muslims and Europeans and which it is proposed to give to Indian Christians and Anglo-Indians. The objection that such an electorate will involve stigmatising each elector and will militate against his rise in the social scale is not one that is likely to weigh with those principally concerned, and if the representatives in the Legislature must be stigmatised, and even the Commission's proposal involves this, there seems no reason why the voters should not be. It is at least arguable also that the position of these classes is more likely to be improved by securing real representation in the Local Legislature than by the ineffective form of representation suggested by the Commission."

Sir, let me take the question of the number of seats we have demanded. In regard to this matter that we all know, there have been two opposing views.

The Congress view is that no minority should get more than its population ratio. The minority view is that there must be weightage over and above the population basis. Now in the proposals in the Minority Pact submitted to the Minorities Committee what is the representation we have claimed? In Assam, Bihar

and Orissa our representation just approaches our population ratio. In Bengal we have given up 8 per cent., in Central Provinces 4 per cent., in Punjab 3·5 per cent., and in United Provinces 6·4 per cent. from our population ratio of representation. In the Central Legislature we have given up in the Upper Chamber 50 per cent. and in the Lower Chamber 25 per cent. from what we would be entitled to on the basis of population. It will thus be seen that we have not taken full benefit even of the accepted principle that the representation shall be according to population. True, we have claimed weightage in Bombay and Madras because the circumstances of these two Provinces make such weightage an absolute necessity. But even here we have not claimed the same weightage as the Muslims, nor has our weightage reduced the position of the caste Hindus. What objection there can be to this part of the claim of the Depressed Classes we are unable to see. The question is often asked—have you the men to fill these seats? Insinuation apart, the answer to this question depends upon what sort of men are wanted. We may not be able to put forth an array of B.A.'s and M.A.'s who will confound the Legislature with their oratory. We may not be able to produce men who will sit on the Treasury Bench or on the Front Opposition Bench. And we do not need to. Our aim is not to run the government. Our aim is to see that the government is not run against us. For that purpose we want men who know our conditions and who will voice our grievances. For this task we have men in abundance who will hold their own. But what surprises us, however, is that this question " Have you the men to fill these seats? " is asked only of the Depressed Classes. It is not asked of the Sikhs, the Muslims or any other minority whose claim for seats far greatly exceeds that of the Depressed Classes. Yet what is the calibre of the men who represent these minorities in the existing Legislatures? In the Bombay Legislative Council nineteen members are allotted to Sind. Of these nineteen members some fourteen do not know a word of English, have never taken part in the debate and have never even asked a question. In the same Council there are some seven seats reserved for the non-Brahmins —of these there are always one or two who do not know English. In the Madras Legislative Council there are four members who do not know English and two of them belong to the non-Brahmin party. In the Punjab Legislative Council there are one hundred members. Of them only twenty know English. The rest deliberate in their mother tongue. Similar instances will no doubt be found in other Provincial Legislatures and we may point out that even the Assembly is not without its non-English-knowing members. Now if the Legislature can be run with non-English-knowing representatives of other communities why should they object to the Depressed Classes being represented by non-English-knowing members? We recognise the importance of the English language and we hope it will continue to hold the same high place that it holds now. But to lay it down as a qualification for a representative is another matter. It may satisfy those who want

a stick to beat down the claim of the Depressed Classes. There can, however, be no doubt that to insist upon such a wild proposition would be pernicious, for it is bound to crush the genius of the people and to deprive them permanently from participating in the institutions which are being forged for the express purpose of promoting their welfare by their own hands. We therefore say that this objection is groundless even if it was honest.

Prime Minister, this Conference was called with a twofold purpose. It was called to discuss the ways and means of realising in practice the declaration made by Lord Irwin that the goal of the British Government in India was to raise her to the status of a Dominion within the British Empire. The second purpose of the Conference was to allow Indians to decide for themselves in consultation with His Majesty's Government the sort of constitution they thought best in the interest. In pursuance of this policy Indians, representative of the different faiths and classes were invited to take part in these deliberations. The Conference which met last year agreed that subject to two conditions India should have a full measure of self-government. Those two conditions were (1) Security for the minorities and (2) Reservations for the period of transition. The question regarding the protection of minorities remained unsolved and the question of the precise form of reservations was left over for want of time.

This Second Session of the Round Table Conference was called mainly to deal with these two questions and we had hopes that the Conference would end with a solution for them. Unfortunately the Conference has failed to come to any agreed solution on these two vital questions and disguise it as much as we may this fact has for the present at any rate darkened our horizon. As we all know the Conference has tossed about from side to side between these two questions only to reveal that there exists a fundamental difference which has divided it into two camps. To one camp the main chapter in the constitution is responsible government, and the reservations to be imposed upon it and the question of minorities is a mere matter of footnotes and appendices which may be written after the main chapter has been drafted. To the other camp in which we the Delegates for the Depressed Classes find ourselves, the minorities question is itself the main chapter. This difference is perhaps reconcilable but I will make bold to say that no serious attempt was made to reconcile this difference. Indeed, as far as the Depressed Classes were concerned the negotiations for a settlement started with the repudiation of their claims by one party to the deal with the result that we are far more apart to-day than we ever were. So much so that there is not the possibility of an agreement on the question as to whether or not the matter should be left to your arbitration.

This reticence on the part of our Hindu friends to define their attitude towards the political demands of the Depressed Classes has come to us as a surprise. They have been insisting upon the British Government to define its attitude towards the political demands of Indians in terms of concrete proposals. We thought

that they would also in their turn define their attitude towards the political demands of the Depressed Classes. They have not thought it wise to do so for reasons best known to themselves. It is not for us to tell them how they should act in a case of this sort. Statesmanship we know is on their side. But we can tell them one thing without mincing matters. It is this. If you ask us the question " Are you in favour of a responsible Executive? " we can answer that question by asking in return another question: " What is the sort of Legislature to which you propose to make your Executive responsible? " The composition and the character of the Legislature are to us determining factors in regard to the question of responsible government. In our opinion the measure of responsibility we could consent to is intimately bound up with the measure or representation the Depressed Classes would get in the Legislature. If the Depressed Classes got no place in the Legislature we would oppose the introduction of responsible government. If the Depressed Classes are given the representation which they think is sufficient for their protection we would consent to the fullest responsibility that may be found consistent with safety and security. That is our attitude and we have no hesitation in saying that we cannot be accused of bad motives who say " Show us your representative Legislature and if it is such that we can put our confidence in it we will gladly consent to consider the measure and manner in which the Executive should be made responsible to it ". To this question no answer is forthcoming. It will not come forth till the minorities problem is settled. That problem, far from being settled, is completely shrouded in darkness and so far as the claims of the Depressed Classes are concerned they have been denied recognition in some quarters. Under these circumstances we are not prepared to lend our support to any scheme of responsible Government. And the questions whether India should advance by stages or all at once and what form the advance should take are to us premature and remote questions on which it would be useless for us at this stage to express our opinion.

There are three observations with which I wish to conclude this statement. First is that we entirely discount the suggestion that our special representation will cause harm to our interest inasmuch as it will stamp us with the special mark of untouchability. Our view is different and it is that it is better for a sick man to reveal his disease and get the right remedy so that he may be cured of it some day. It would be fatal if he concealed it out of shame and failed to seek his remedy in time. We therefore refuse to be foiled in our attempt to secure the real protection that we need. Second is that the enactment of fundamental rights or the abolition of untouchability by law will not suffice. The elimination of untouchability by law is one thing. Its elimination in fact is another and more important. The latter is a question of legislative and administrative action which alone can equalise our position with the rest of our fellows. This will be impossible of realisation unless the Depressed Classes have sufficient power to control the Legisla-

ture and through the Legislature the Executive. Thirdly we must have our rights and safeguards embodied in the constitution. We refuse to accept the word of any individual, however highly placed, to guarantee our position in the future.

Mr. Prime Minister, I have done and I thank you again for your indulgence.

Dr. S. K. Datta : Prime Minister, there are a few of us who are survivors of a past age, that of the Assembly of 1924-1926. There are some of us, not more than seven or eight of us, who voted for a Resolution in March 1924 asking the Government of India to summon a Round Table Conference. At that time, Sir, we were told—perhaps on no substantial grounds—that that particular proposal was not favoured in the Viceregal Lodge in Delhi. It was this morning a real pleasure to hear Lord Reading make his declaration regarding his belief in the method of negotiation. Before this small group, however, passes a vote of appreciation regarding its own prescience, we shall await to-morrow and the declaration that will be made, so that we may know whether our original labours of 1924 are going to result in something that we looked upon as necessary and asked for at that time.

Now, Sir, this afternoon I want to place before you one or two considerations regarding our position. Among us here there are two communities which were excluded from the Federal Structure Committee, namely the Anglo-Indians, who constitute a hundred and fifty thousand persons, and the Indian Christians who are roughly about six millions in India.

There are other smaller communities which are represented, such as the Sikhs and the Europeans. As you will recognise, Prime Minister, I have never made any communal claim, but, if you will permit me, I will make a communal hint. Apparently not much recognition is given to a community until it has proved its capacity to make itself troublesome to the administration. When it does that, then it begins to get recognition. We Christians have not yet proved that we are able to give trouble.

In the second place, we have had a special interest in the Federal Structure, and in this question of Federation, because the most highly developed and most educated portion of the Indian Christian community are in the State of Travancore. One third of the population of that State is Christian, and I should like to take this opportunity publicly to acknowledge the fair and just way in which the dynasty which presides over Travancore has dealt with the Christian community. The Christians have not been given any special protection, they are a part of the general population, and as voters of the general electorate. Whenever I visit Travancore I am impressed by the predominant part they play in that State and of the opportunities thus given to them by the Travancore Government.

Now, we as a Conference have failed with regard to a communal settlement. We were told that if an agreed solution emerged the general problems would be settled. I for one very much doubted whether that solution would be forthcoming. It could hardly be

forthcoming, for when everybody is asked to set forth his claims, it becomes impossible to adjust those claims one with another, and I feel that possibly we ought to have used other methods in trying to reach a settlement. What those methods should be I need not go into here, but there are certain things, Prime Minister, which I want to say.

Our present constitution makes provision for the representation of economic groups; that is to say, Chambers of Commerce, jute manufacturers, colliery managers and similar interests. The British traders form a constituency in the Madras Presidency and they are only eight in number; that is to say, eight persons vote and return one member to the Madras Legislative Council. It seems to me that as we already have something of this sort there is no reason why it should not be extended. Mr. Joshi has put in a plea in this connection, and I support it, but why should not it be extended to agricultural labourers? I believe a part of Mr. Srinivasan's constituency would be included immediately by that method. It seems to me the natural method in India is to give representation by vocation. I merely suggest one way, but I do not press it particularly.

Why have we abandoned all hope of the method of proportional representation? I do believe there is a great deal we might do even at this late stage by applying the principle of proportional representation to Indian electoral problems. But whatever you may do or may not do there is one thing I would ask of you, Mr. Prime Minister. Will you ensure that those of us who have real fundamental conscientious objections to voting on a communal list should be permitted to contract out and put ourselves on to the general list? We ask that for the sake of our own personal freedom. We do not want to be put in with a group of persons with whom we cannot have general sympathy.

I feel I must make some mention of federation. Those of us who have studied the history of the growth and evolution of the British Commonwealth of Nations realise that it has become more and more clear to the British people that there is such a difference between free States on the one hand and States that are not free on the other that they could not be combined in the same system. In a similar way I sometimes wonder whether we are not trying in India to bring together free States on the one hand and autocratic groups on the other. I wonder whether you can combine the two together. I merely want to utter a word of warning that we should at any rate in our future development in the idea of federation make certain conditions precedent to the coming in of particular units. I do not refer only to Indian States. Take, for example, the North-West Frontier Province. Sir Abdul Qaiyum had my warmest sympathy in the demands he made, because I believe that we need a free Frontier Province to come into this federation and so long as the North-West Frontier Province is not free it ought not to come into the federation. I therefore support him in every one of his demands with regard to the freedom of the Frontier Province. What are

we going to do if we get this Federation now? Are we going to entrench all the autocracies of India at the Centre? Perhaps our fate is not going to be so bad as that, but at any rate I wish to utter a word of caution.

The second point I wish to emphasise is the interest of the masses. Mr. Gandhi has from time to time told us about the masses, and that the constitution must be built up to fit them and not built up to fit ourselves. That is to my mind something which is fundamental. I have been present as an outsider at meetings of the Federal Structure Committee, and I have heard discussions on commercial discrimination and who shall trade and who shall operate the finances of India, who shall take the profits that accrue, and what kind of merchants shall be permitted to obtain a livelihood in India. The consideration that came into my mind was what is the good of talking about the livelihood of merchants. What about the livelihood of the ordinary people? A constitution must have certain economic foundations and if these are not properly laid you cannot build up a constitution that will have stability. You cannot have a constitution giving political independence to the people unless you build it on adequate economic foundations. That is one of the dilemmas in which I find myself. Why is Dr. Ambedkar here? Is it to protect against social discrimination? Or is it because of the necessity which lies on him to ensure a livelihood to the semi-starved millions of his community? Why are the Muslim delegates present here? Is it merely to protect Muslim culture, or is it to defend those masses of the people who to-day bear the main burden of agricultural indebtedness in the two Provinces of the Punjab and Bengal?

Mr. Prime Minister, I was a signatory of a letter which was sent to you. You have had a great number of letters and possibly you will not recall the specific document signed by some of us which suggested to you that provincial and federal development could not be separate; they must go hand in hand together. I stand by that, but I would like to ask one thing: where are the people of India? They are not in the Centre—there are no people there—the people of India are in the Provinces, in the districts. Having said that, I feel the only way in which you can develop these people of India at this particular time is somehow or other to lift from the Provinces the incubus, the financial, the administrative incubus and even the moral incubus of the present Centre. Until that is raised you are not going to get freedom for the people. When you lift this burden, then alone will there be freedom. For many years now I have had to travel and I have been to parts of the world not much visited by Indians of our class. For some months I was a guest of friends in China. I quite realise the terrific things that are happening in China. Those of us who happen to know things with a little nearness do not wish those catastrophes to overtake us in India, the lack of Central Government for instance, a government which does not operate. We do not want that. Nor do we want a military dictatorship, which is worse. But take a city like Canton. I spent a

week in Canton, which it has been believed was ruined by Communists and had a most unhappy population. Now I have lived in Calcutta for ten or twelve years but Canton was seething with a desire for improvement such as I have not known in Calcutta with its history of a hundred and fifty years of good government. There were all kinds of schemes on foot, civic amenities, tramway services, new streets, new gardens, new parks. Among the teachers, in whom I am always interested, and in matters of education I found a spirit I did not find among my own; here they wanted to work out new and great things. Here was the revoluntionary spirit showing its best side.

One of the reasons why this incubus of the Centre should be raised from India is that you might get the revoluntionary spirit of India released into constructive channels in the Provinces. To-day it is not being released into constructive channels; and this we must somehow effect.

Sir, before closing I want to refer to one matter already referred to by Dr. Moonje, namely, the establishment of equality. Sir, within three years possibly there may be some Indians who may raise a monument to the unimplemented promise made to India nearly a hundred years ago when the Charter Act of 1833 laid it down that there should be no discrimination on the grounds of race. I want to ask: Has that promise been implemented?

There are things which can be done which I believe will help you to create trust between yourselves and India. There is the taking away of all these discriminations and the taking away of distrust between yourselves and Indians. That spirit of equality must go abroad. Wherever I go I find Indians complaining that there is not equality. I was the guest of a merchant community at Kobe in Japan where there were a hundred and fifty families or so of Indians. They told me how they were unable to obtain facilities because they were Indians. Apparently British-Indian subjects abroad, in Japan and in China and elsewhere, are looked upon as a sort of inferior British subject. I want here personally to acknowledge the generous way in which I was treated by all the British consular officials: but I want to tell you the sort of general feeling amongst Indians who are abroad. We have got somehow or another to mend that feeling and make it better. The problem of India to me is not wholly a problem of a constitution, though I agree a constitution is necessary; it is very largely a problem of what the Americans call human engineering; that is to say, giving people a chance; bringing them up from the bottom and putting them on their feet; rebuilding the economic foundations of the country.

Sir, we wait with great interest your declaration to-morrow. I do trust that those of us who originally voted for that Resolution in 1924 will not go away disappointed.

Mr. Wedgwood Benn: Prime Minister, my first duty—and it is a pleasure also—is to thank you, Sir, for giving me and my fellow Delegates of the Labour Party an opportunity of continuing as their

representatives at this Conference, although we are no longer Members of Parliament. It is a very great privilege. Indeed I am sure I am expressing the opinion of every man and woman in this Conference when I say we all feel it a great privilege to participate in these proceedings. Acquaintances have been formed; they have, in the jargon, ripened into friendship, and the spirit of trust has been fostered.

So far as educational work is concerned, speaking as one who for a short time attempted to discharge the heavy responsibilities of a Secretary of State, I would say that I learnt more in a month of Conference than in a year of files. Practical questions, even remote from our immediate discussions, have been treated. I wonder how long it would have taken to get the necessary advance—even the advance that has been made in the North-West Frontier Province if it had not been for its distinguished representative here, Sir Abdul Qaiyum beginning with that fanciful speech at our very first sitting about the flea in the breeches. Prime Minister, there is a spirit of fraternity in this Conference; there is a spirit of equality in this Conference well befitting the soil of freedom on which it is held.

I do not know what will be remembered as the most famous statement made in the Round Table Conference. Sir Akbar Hydari conferred a peerage on Mr. Joshi in my hearing; but I think perhaps the most famous was the lapse of tongue by Dr. Ambedkar when, without signs of dissent from Their Highnesses he referred to "my brother Princes."

Prime Minister, what a change in the method of treatment of Indian Affairs this Conference represents! Two years ago what was the British attitude towards Indian problems? It could be expressed in the nursery words, "Shut your eyes and open your mouth and see what somebody sends you." That is gone. Do you remember that two years ago your Government, then in a minority, stood its trial before the House of Commons because it had ventured, in advance of the Report of the Statutory Commission, even to outline the goal of British policy? It escaped with a verdict of not proven. Those days, Prime Minister, have gone. We shall hear no more of tutorial Commissions. No one would venture for very shame to get up here and read out the second, third and fourth paragraphs of the Preamble of the Act of 1919. The days of dictation are gone.

The days of dictation are gone, without a section or a sub-section of an Act of Parliament being changed. The days of unilateral dictation are gone, and the days of conference are come; and for all time in the treatment—I do not say solution—of the Indian problem we shall follow the lines of free, equal negotiation and conference. That is indeed a great gain.

Prime Minister, despite all that has been said in the press about the differences that have been exhibited at this Conference, see how much nearer we have got in many matters to agreement. The general outlines of the Delhi Pact, as it is called, the note of conversations between Mr. Gandhi and Lord Irwin, were federation,

safeguards, responsibility. They have been filled in at this Conference to some extent. Take even a matter like the Army. I think it is generally felt that the British Government must be in a position to discharge its responsibility to Their Highnesses. It is generally recognised—a point often overlooked in this country—that it is the Indian taxpayer who pays for the army, and on some basis of contract has been outlined a possible solution for this intractable problem. Furthermore, it has been generally recognised that it is necessary that in some way the popular representatives of Indian opinion should be in a position to develop, and develop rapidly, these methods of self-defence which, as the Mahatma truly said, are not an accident but an incident of self-government.

Even in the matter of finance, Sir, certain propositions have been universally accepted. It has been agreed that the credit of India must be maintained by the punctual discharge of her obligations, and a scheme has been outlined by which the necessary authority might be given to the Indian Finance Minister, thereby creating in the minds of investors some of the confidence which is supposed to be felt at the present, but always regarding the problem not with British eyes but with Indian eyes.

On the question of commercial discrimination, owing largely to the persuasive and the able way in which the European representatives have put their case, the differences have been narrowed down to almost nothing. In the matter of commercial and tariff policy, it is universally admitted that India must be free, and I should like to repeat one remark I made in the Federal Structure Committee, that if and when this Government becomes a tariff Government, creating tariff walls in the interests of this country, then the problem of commercial and tariff independence for India becomes one which is much more than urgent; it becomes a problem which is immediate.

Prime Minister, much has been done to reach agreement, and if no bargain—to use a word I do not like—has been made, it has been due to the fact that we have gone as far as we can go until we know definitely what the intentions of the Government are.

Every one is now asking what is to happen next, and I have no doubt the Government is considering what security it can deposit, what hostages it can give, to the representatives of India in order to protect us in future from any charge of bad faith. There are great difficulties, Sir, I have often thought about what would happen to the Secretary of State when this Conference is over. He and the Lord Chancellor—after, I hope, a rest from their very arduous labours—with the aid of their tireless, able and devoted staff, will begin to build this broad Highway of Peace. There are boulders in the way; there are forests to be penetrated. They present real difficulties, although such material may, if properly treated, even form the very substance of the construction of the road. But there is more than that. Of this I am deeply conscious from my own experience. Behind every boulder you will find a sharp-shooter; the forests are infested with bandits. These are the real enemies,

of them we have heard very little indeed at this Conference—prejudice, self-interest, abyssmal ignorance and—what I think is far worse—knowledge that is out-of-date. Prime Minister, the one danger, as I see it, is that. Do not let the work be continued by experts inspired by diehards.

What should the Government do? To-morrow, Prime Minister, you are to make a most important statement. Naturally we have had no share in its preparation and have no knowledge of its contents; but I would suggest, if I may respectfully do so, as the course to be pursued by the Government, the course that was outlined with your authority, Sir, by the Viceroy in that speech of July 9th, 1930, to which I have referred once or twice in the debates. There are three things required. First, you must select a force to help you; secondly, you must secure the co-operation of that force; and thirdly, you must invest it with the power which comes from the august approval of a sovereign Parliament.

What is the force, the one force that can help you forward in your task? I say it is this Conference. Can you find a body anywhere with the same practical experience of the problems, yes, and with the same determination to overcome the obstacles which we all recognise? If rightly understood, if rightly handled, this Conference can do more for good understanding and sound constitutional arrangement between Great Britain and India than all the Blue Books which adorn—or should I say encumber—the walls of all the offices in the world. This Conference should be the bodyguard of the Secretary of State. It is his corps d'élite to seize and fortify the ground as it is won. You can well understand the horror and dismay which came into our hearts when we heard that it might be that our Committee would be disbanded before it had even attempted to occupy the central position which it had been brought here to attack.

Chairman: Who said that?

Mr. Wedgwood Benn : That was the belief at the time. Let me say this. It is a most significant thing that no body of Indian Delegates was willing to see the disbandment take place. Why? Because India attaches great hopes to this Conference, because India recognises the power of this Conference. Prime Minister, if I might let you into a secret, among the reports which have been presented to you of the deliberations of the Federal Structure Committee and reports on various aspects of federation, one is missing. There was one debate which took place by the courtesy of the Lord Chancellor which appeared in the end to be out of order altogether. It was a debate on some recommendations which formed the theme of the Statutory Commission that Provincial autonomy should come without the security at the same time of Central responsibility. That debate killed the proposition.

Mr. Prime Minister, if this Conference when it is out of order can do a job like that, God knows what it might do when it is in order.

That is the first thing, to select a body that is going to help you. The second thing is to enlist its co-operation. It is not sufficient to

say that here is a powerful body of Indian opinion and then to let them go. Do not let them go until you have exacted pledges and promises of co-operation from them. It is said that last year's Conference ended with a pronouncement. That is true, but last year's Conference was exploratory. This year's Conference we hoped would be in some measure decisive. It is perfectly true that it cannot be decisive finally. No decision can be arrived at until the communal problem is solved. Is it not possible, Prime Minister, that this Conference should draw up—receiving the assent of the parties that sit all round these tables—Heads of Understanding between Great Britain and India, imposing reciprocal obligations both on ourselves and upon our Indian colleagues? That is the second step.

The third step is this, Prime Minister. Take them to Parliament to get Parliamentary ratification. Forgive me for saying it, Sir, but an almost intolerable responsibility rests on your shoulders in this Indian matter. You have dismissed one Parliament; you have called another Parliament; you stand panoplied in unparalleled Parliamentary power. Use that power, Prime Minister. Wield your sceptre while it is in your grasp. Go from this Indian Assembly of St. James's to the British Assembly of St. Stephens and ask them to ratify the Heads of Understanding which have been drawn up in the negotiations, and then ask our colleagues here round the table to take them back to India, to invite and secure similar ratification there. Is this a fanciful dream? After years of shameful conflict, it was done for Ireland just ten years ago in Downing Street. It was done nine months ago for one section and a great section of the problem in the Viceregal Lodge at Delhi between Lord Irwin and Mr. Gandhi, and Mr. Gandhi went back again to the Congress at Karachi, and with a wave of his wand—or I should say, with a turn of his spinning-wheel—he secured assent which up to now has given peace in India.

Prime Minister, if this were done, see how much all your difficulties are eased. Supposing the majority communities go back to India knowing there is the hope, seeing certain hope of the achievement of what they wish, then they can turn to the minorities, they can give generously, they can give recklessly in order that they may share in this hope and that we may have what I believe to be the greatest British interest: not a divided, but a united India.

I think I have said no word, Prime Minister, which is incompatible with my recollection of the responsibilities I once carried. I think of the Secretary of State and the work that lies ahead for him. He is faced with great administrative difficulties. His problem is urgent. Violence is raising its head. Anarchy is raising its head. It is necessary that crime should be punished and punished swiftly, whatever government is in power; that has got to be done. You want a strong government in India. But what is a strong government?

Is a strong government one supported solely by route marches and ordinances—power swiftly diminishing, short credits obtained

at exorbitant rates of interest, guns? Prime Minister, there is one thing that we all know about a gun, and that is that it recoils. We want a strong government, but a government can only be strong if it rests upon the assent of the people. It is a pitiful thing, Prime Minister, but it is true; in India youth is against us. Conflicts come and we are driven into conflict with those who are striving for the uplifting of India, who have been fighting against the drink evil, who have been fighting against social evils, who have been fighting against poverty. We want these people to be on our side in rebuilding a greater and better India. We want the co-operation of good citizens. A strong government is a government backed by patriots. How are we to get that? It is here. Here is the willing co-operation if we can only seize it. I know nothing of the Government's plans, but I would beg you, Prime Minister, if necessary to alter your programme. Do not let to-morrow be a day of pronouncements followed by compliments. Let to-morrow be a day of reciprocal undertakings and let the second Session of the Round Table Conference be crowned by a Treaty of Good Will.

(*Mr. Ramsay MacDonald here vacated the Chair, which was taken by Lord Sankey*).

Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru: Lord Chancellor, we heard this morning the authentic voice of wise Liberalism of England. We have just now heard the courageous accents of British Labour. In the few remarks that I propose to make this afternoon I venture to express to you, howsoever humbly, but I hope clearly and unfalteringly, the rising ambition of my country.

My Lord Chancellor, it was more than a year ago that we met in this historic hall upon summons issued to us from the Prime Minister, who happens also to be the Prime Minister to-day. We came here in circumstances very different from those which prevail to-day in India. I will remind you of what I said last year; we came here in the midst of great obloquy, great suspicion, and great distrust which followed us from India to this country. We worked here for three months in the closest co-operation with British representatives of all parties; and at the end of that we went back—some of us at any rate went back—as the determined missionaries of peace and peaceful settlement of the outstanding questions between England and India. I will not refer to the events which took place in India. There were two great actors in that pact. There was Lord Irwin, a man who is far more respected in our country than you realise; and there is Mr. Gandhi, from whom any one of us may differ in his methods, but from whom none of us can differ in his ideals. He is here to-day as a witness to the success of last year's Conference. That was the achievement of last year's Conference. To-day we are assembled here to carry on the work which was left unfinished in January last. We have been carrying on this work, earnestly, and sincerely and to the best of our ability—as I hope the Lord Chancellor will bear witness—for the last three months. No one who has not sat at the meetings or attended the

meetings of the Federal Structure Committee can realise the immensity of the task to which we have been applying ourselves. When you remember that we were there considering the problem on the solution of which depends the future of 350,000,000 men and women, not in British India alone, but also in Indian India; when you remember that there were persons assembled at that Committee who held and held very strongly their points of view, not always identical; when you remember that undoubtedly there were divergent interests to be reconciled; when you remember all that, then, and then alone, can you realise the immensity of that task. But, My Lord Chancellor, the interest of the work increased as the difficulties increased; and I venture to think that if the problem had been simpler than it actually proved to be, if there were no divergent interests to be reconciled, if there were no strong prejudices on one side or the other to be conquered—well, we should have long ago gone back to India to our happiness, and perhaps to your relief. But, undaunted by the difficulties of our task and actuated by the hope, and I might say by the faith that it was clearly due to you and due to our country that we should conquer these difficulties, we have proceeded to face the duties that were cast upon our shoulders.

I will not claim that in every possible respect our work has been attended with success, but I hope I am not putting forward an immodest claim when I do say, on behalf of the Committee on which I have had the honour to serve, that we have achieved no inconsiderable measure of success in that Committee; and here, Lord Chancellor, if you will permit me to say so, I will say—and I am sure I am speaking not merely on my own behalf but on behalf of every single member of that Committee—that we recognise, and recognise freely, frankly and generously, that such success as has been achieved in that Committee has been in no small measure—indeed, I might say has been almost wholly—due to the wise guidance that you gave to that Committee. Our debt of gratitude to you is great.

I remember—and perhaps Your Lordship will also remember—that there were occasions when faith seemed almost to forsake us, when we felt we were in the midst of a difficulty which could not be overcome; and it was on those occasions that we found the intervention of Lord Reading so helpful. In years gone by it was my pride and privilege to be associated with him, and, if Lord Reading will permit me to say so to his face, I never felt prouder of my old chief than when on some critical occasions in the Committee he tried to reconcile conflicting views. That has been Lord Reading's great contribution to the work of our Committee, and I must freely acknowledge our debt of gratitude to him also.

I need scarcely say that every one of us feels we have had throughout our arduous labours, except for a short time when domestic circumstances prevented members of Parliament from being present, the unstinted support and encouragement of our friends

of the Labour Party, and particularly of Mr. Wedgwood Benn and Mr. Lees-Smith.

It is under those circumstances, with that encouragement and with that help, that we have proceeded with our work. I do contest and contest very strongly—and here, if I may say so, I respectfully support Lord Reading—the criticism which has been advanced in certain quarters that the Round Table Conference has already failed or that it has been frozen to death. It is here; it has not failed; and I sincerely hope and trust that, when party passions have been allayed and when it is possible for people to see things clearly and not through the mists of party prejudice, it will be recognised that this Conference has contributed a solid amount of work in pursuance of the policy of which it is the result.

Now, Lord Chancellor, last year, whether we liked it or whether we did not like it, and it is no use going to original documents, the idea of an all-India Federation did emerge.

Not only did it emerge, but it received what I might say was the almost unanimous support of every section of the Conference. I have never looked upon that idea as a will-o'-the-wisp. Frankly those of us who have applied our minds to this problem seriously think that it is a far nobler idea than the idea of a constitution limited only to British India, and you, Lord Chancellor, if anybody, have got to plead guilty to that charge, because time after time you have reminded us that we must not talk of this India or of that India, of British India or of Indian India, but of India without an adjective. It is in pursuance of that idea that we have proceeded to attack this problem.

Let me tell you that when once you have solved the problem of British India more or less to your satisfaction you will not have solved the Indian problem. You will then come up against a solid block of Indian States, representing one-third of India, and demanding very seriously the satisfaction of their claims against the British Government, economic, financial and political. Then you will be bound to have a second machinery for the settlement of these disputes and these claims, and we cannot afford to multiply governmental machinery in India. Therefore so far as I am concerned I do maintain that that is the only possible idea, that that is the only possible programme which holds the field and that that is the only possible programme which has been before my country and your country during the last twelve months. Let us not therefore turn our backs on that. Let us face it boldly and courageously, recognising that there are difficulties, that those difficulties have got to be met and to be overcome. Therefore, My Lord Chancellor, I do say that this idea of an all-India Federation, presenting as it does the prospect of many centuries of a united India, with all its defects and all its shortcomings is the only idea on which we can afford to work.

When I remember that a wise statesman like Lord Reading, who has had experience of India and Indian problems, of British India

and Indian States for six years, supported our demand for responsibility at the Centre on the basis of an all-Indian Federation, when I remember that you, My Lord Chancellor, have consistently supported this idea I am inclined to think it was a little too harsh to say it is a will-o'-the-wisp and that we need not follow that idea. Therefore speaking for myself, until the absurdity or the impossibility of it has been demonstrated I cling to that, and that is my attitude with regard to it.

Now, My Lord, when this idea of an all-India Federation was discussed last year, Their Highnesses, our countrymen, the Princes, tracing their descent some of them to the Sun and the Moon, were democratic enough to identify themselves without national interests and they made a generous response to our invitation. Is it right, is it fair, is it just, after twelve months for anyone to say that the Princes have gone back on that idea? I think there can be no grosser libel on the Princes than to make that assertion, and if there are any doubts in the minds of any sceptics left on that point, then I will remind them of the great speech which was delivered yesterday by His Highness the Nawab of Bhopal. His Highness spoke in no uncertain terms; he spoke with the authority which belongs to him as the Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes, with the authority that belongs to him as a patriotic Prince and as a patriotic Indian. Let us not forget that. It is perfectly true that when you have a big problem like this to take into consideration there must arise some differences of opinion in regard to method or in regard to certain details. I am reminded sometimes, and have been reminded by my own countrymen and by some of my English friends, of the scheme which is associated with the names of Their Highnesses the Maharajas of Patiala, Dholpur and Indore. What I would venture to say to them in regard to this is, that even they have supported the idea of an all-India Federation. It is only in regard to the method of approach that they have ventured to differ from others. Now is that difference of such a vital character, such an unbridgable character, that it is open to any critic to say that the Princes have gone back on that idea? As was pointed out by my friend Sirdar Jarmani Dass, yesterday, in his excellent speech, to which a reference was made also by my friend Mr. Jayakar this morning, it is by no means impossible to bring about a reconciliation between the two ideas. At any rate this much I shall say, that even in regard to those methods of difference this Federal Structure Committee has been called upon to apply its mind only to the idea of an all-India Federation based on the message which we all had last year. That is the only thing which has held the field and which to-day holds the field. I need scarcely remind the House that last year when we discussed or rather when we put forward this idea of an all-India Federation, His Highness the Maharaja of Bikaner and His Highness the Nawab of Bhopal made it abundantly clear that if they consented to an all-India Federation it would be only on three conditions.

The first condition which they put forward was that their rights under the treaties entered into between them and the Crown should

remain unimpaired. There is no quarrel with regard to that. None of us has tried to go back on those rights; none of us has ever thought of it.

The second condition which they laid down was that, so far as their internal sovereignty and autonomy was concerned, that should remain unimpaired, except to the extent to which they of their own free will and volition delegated powers to the Federal Legislature. There is no quarrel with regard to that, and there has been none with regard to that.

The third condition which they laid down lastly was that they would come into the federation only upon the understanding that India continued to be a member of the British Commonwealth of Nations. So far as men of my way of thinking are concerned I believe I can honestly say that there is no dispute with regard to that and there can be no dispute with regard to that.

Now those three vital conditions so far as the all-India Federation is concerned—conditions imposed upon us all by Their Highnesses—have to my mind been completely fulfilled. Questions of detail remain to be settled. Many of them have been settled. And I venture to say that if you read the Report of this year's Federal Structure Committee you will find that there is a far greater measure of agreement between them and us than is realised by the outside public. Two or three questions no doubt remain to be settled and they are questions of a most vital character.

The first question which remains to be settled is as to what is to be the amount of representation to be given to the Indian States in the Upper House and in the Lower House. Even in regard to that I will venture to say that, though no formal agreement may have been recorded so far, we are far nearer the solution this year than we were last year.

The second question that remains to be settled is the method of representation. Now I hope I am not wrong when I say that even in regard to that method of representation there were remarks made this year by Their Highnesses the Maharaja of Bikaner and the Nawab Sahib of Bhopal which encourage us to hope that they will realise the necessities of the situation and—I am repeating the words of His Highness the Maharaja of Bikaner—that they will see to it that their subjects have a voice in the election of representatives to the Lower House. Well, those ideas have got to bear fruit and I have not the least doubt that they will bear fruit. But one thing I would say: that while I have every possible sympathy with the ambitions and aspirations of their subjects, I do not think we shall be helping their cause by forcing Their Highnesses' hands. I do believe and I do trust that Their Highnesses—whatever other faults you may ascribe to them—are very alive to the necessities of the situation, and when once they decide to come into a federation, I think you may take it that the new situation will arise which will itself induce them—it may be in the case of some, after some delay—it may be in the case of others immediately—but which will induce them to take steps which will legitimately satisfy the

aspirations of those who are anxious that they should be satisfied. So far as I am concerned, I impose no such conditions, because I believe that they are alive to the necessity of this.

Now, My Lord, I will pass on to another aspect of the question so far as all-India Federation is concerned. Last year there was anxiety expressed on behalf of some of the smaller States that we must do something to secure their adequate representation and to secure the protection of their rights. I think in regard to that matter also we have made a substantial advance this year. There are many of us here who are genuinely anxious that the scheme which will finally be placed on the Statute Book shall be comprehensive enough to give a proper place not merely to the bigger States but also to the smaller States. That, I submit, Sir, is a further gain which we have achieved this year. Of course, there is the big question of the relations between the two Houses, but a great measure of agreement in regard to such questions has been achieved again this year, and I have no doubt that, if we apply our minds to some of the remaining questions, it is not beyond the scope of statesmanship, British or Indian, to put the question of the relations between the two Houses on a satisfactory footing.

This has been the net result of our work on the constitutional side. Probably I will be asked here, what about safeguards? I cannot forget that last year, when His Majesty's Government authorised the Prime Minister to make that declaration, it was expressly stated therein that responsibility at the Centre was the objective they had in view, provided it was coupled with the necessary safeguards for the period of transition. Now, when we went back to India and when the negotiations were started between Lord Irwin and Mr. Gandhi, this question at once attracted the notice and attention of Mr. Gandhi, and you will find, as was pointed out by my friend, Mr. Jayakar, this morning, that there is express reference to an all-India Federation, to responsibility at the Centre, and to such safeguards as may be found to be in the interests of India. Therefore the question of the safeguards need not frighten us, or at any rate those of us who seem to claim to possess an extra dose of democratic sentiment in regard to such matters.

What has been the history with regard to safeguards during the last few weeks that we have been working in the Federal Structure Committee? I will not go into every one of them, but I shall take up the most important of them. Let us take first of all the question of discriminatory legislation against European commerce or against European residents in India carrying on business in India. Here I am bound to say that the spirit which our European colleagues from British India have shown in arriving at a settlement in regard to this matter has been extremely encouraging, and we gratefully acknowledge that.

We have received in regard to this matter great assistance from men like Sir Hubert Carr and Mr. Benthall who have recognised that there is need for compromise on matters of this character, and

I venture to think that so far as that particular matter is concerned on ninety-nine points out of a hundred we are all of us agreed.

Now, let us come to the financial safeguards. The financial safeguards were discussed at great length last year and they have been again discussed this year. Lord Reading gave a notable contribution this year, as he did also last year, and Sir Samuel Hoare read out to the Federal Structure Committee a special statement with the authority of the Government. We were told, and we were warned time after time, that the financial situation was such that it would be impolitic and it would be unwise to go into details regarding matters of financial safeguards. Notwithstanding that, I think a great measure of agreement has been arrived at. If financial safeguards have not received their final shape it is at the instance of Sir Samuel Hoare and at the request of the Government, but I venture to think that as months roll by we shall find it more and more easy to come to a settlement in regard to financial safeguards which will on the one hand, give a sense of security to the British investor and will give ample scope and ample freedom and responsibility to the Indian Finance Minister of the future. I ventured, Sir, to put forward a scheme with regard to a Financial Advisory Council and I would remind the House that it received a considerable amount of support from such a financial expert as Mr. Pethick-Lawrence, and I hope I am right in saying that it was received also with approval by men like Mr. Benthall. So far as Sirdar Jarmani Dass is concerned I will not commit him to any position beyond this that he was prepared to receive it favourably without committing himself to any particular details of the scheme.

I pass on now to the safeguards relating to economic and external affairs. The Report of the Federal Structure Committee is in the hands of everyone of you, but I venture to point out that if you examine the scheme that has been suggested in certain quarters with regard to defence and external affairs, you will find that in its essentials it places a considerable measure of power in our hands with a promise that the rest of the power should come into our hands after a short period of transition. It is not as if the Governor-General of the future is going to be wholly irresponsible to the Indian Legislature. The Indian Legislature will continue to possess those powers which it has at the present moment of influencing the decision of the Governor-General, but for a period of transition so far as the Army Member is concerned this scheme provides that he shall continue to be responsible to the Governor-General, which means the Crown. It may be that it may be criticised. It may be that it may be open to the criticism that that scheme does not give us immediately the power of control over the Army. Frankly, I am one of those who have no hesitation in saying that we are not in a hurry—at any rate I am in no hurry—to take control of the Army immediately or of external affairs immediately. I can bide my time. We ought to be able to build up our strength with regard to other matters, to be able to influence the decision of the Government of India in regard to the Army,

and in regard to other matters on which so much depends. I have not the least doubt that if this is given effect to, if it is given a fair trial and is subjected to fair experience we must get into possession of the reversion of the control within a very short period of time.

Now, My Lord, I pass from that rather unpleasant aspect of the safeguards.

Your Lordship will remember that since last year everyone of us has been agreed that the minorities must be safeguarded, must be protected in the position of their rights. I must say with sorrow, and a genuine spirit of sorrow, that so far as that matter is concerned failure has got to be registered. Nevertheless, let not that failure be over-rated. So far as several matters are concerned, I do not think there was any dispute last year or that there has been any dispute this year. The minorities are entitled to every guarantee in regard to their religion, in regard to their culture, in regard to their services, and I would also say in regard to their representation even in the Cabinet, but there has been a dispute as regards the method of their representation and the amount of their representation in the Legislative Council and the future Parliament of India. Well, it always seems that a very strange fate has been pursuing us in regard to this matter, both in India and here, and at times when one is inclined to think one almost feels that perhaps the task of solving this difficult problem must be left to our successors. But that would be taking, in my humble judgment, a very pessimistic view of the matter. I believe the rising tide of Indian sentiment is in favour of a settlement which will bring every satisfaction to the minorities and to the Depressed Classes, which will give them an assured and honourable place in the constitution.

I will not venture to discuss on this occasion the method of settlement. Such methods as have formed the subject of discussion at this Conference have yielded no result, but I venture to hope that in the months that lie ahead, profiting by the experience which we gained last year and also by the experience which we have gained here, we may yet apply ourselves to that great task in our own country and redeem ourselves from the undoubted stigma that sticks to us in this particular matter. Speaking in my own personal capacity and without representing any particular section of Indian opinion, I am one of those who hold that there is no sacrifice which it is not worth making in winning over the minorities. That is one of my deepest convictions, and so far as I am concerned I am not going to quarrel about any measure of settlement so long as a settlement is arrived at. Therefore, My Lord, so far as the minorities and the Depressed Classes are concerned, no one is prepared to deny the fairness or the justice of the claim that they have put forward, namely, that their rights must be protected and protected adequately. If there is a dispute as regards the method of settlement, that dispute must be settled primarily by ourselves; and if we fail, then I

venture to think the only alternative is that His Majesty's Government should take it upon themselves to give their decision.

My Lord, I will not take up your time any further, but I will now come to refer only to one special matter which has been interesting every one of us. It is this: if this has been the measure of agreement arrived at, what are we going to do, and what are you going to do? Are you going to send us back to our country with a promise that you will start us with Provincial autonomy, and with a further promise that you will work up to federation in India within the next few years? Let me in all humility tell you that so far as I am concerned, having given this matter my best consideration both from the theoretical and practical points of view, I stand convinced that your scheme of Provincial autonomy is doomed to failure in India, and that there is no party of any standing in India, be it the Congress, be it the Liberals, be it any party—and I hope Mr. Ramaswami Mudaliyar will make the position of his party clear at some time or another—which is prepared to work Provincial autonomy. I say that, because we do feel that Provincial autonomy is not only not going to satisfy the aspirations of any particular party in India, but because I think it will stop our progress for the future for many years. Political sentiment and political opinion change very rapidly both in India and in England, and we cannot afford to take any risks in that matter.

Therefore I will beg of you, I will entreat, I will urge upon you to think twice before you adopt the old-fashioned instalment system of reforms in regard to India. I do urge it on you that the time has come when you should think out and evolve a comprehensive scheme which will cover both the Centre and the Provinces, and introduce them simultaneously. We can afford—at any rate so far as I am concerned I can afford—to wait. I have enough patience to wait. I am not at all sure that it should take as long a time as your experts seem to think. But if it is a question of choice between half a loaf and a full loaf after a year or two, I have no difficulty in making up my mind. That is the position I take up and that is the position that I shall continue to take up.

Now My Lord, I will not say anything more with regard to that subject. Mr. Wedgwood Benn raised some very interesting questions this afternoon and he asked the Prime Minister what he and the Government proposed to do as soon as this Conference was over to-morrow or the day after to-morrow. If I may respectfully venture to suggest it, the measure of success that has been shown has been so considerable that we feel justified in asking you not to give up the Conference method, to continue it, to have your plans ready and to put them in progress in continuation of the work of this Conference and not in supersession of this Conference; because it is only by negotiation, by argument, by mutual exchange of our views freely and frankly that we can hope to achieve settlement.

Lord Chancellor, I do not know what your plans will be, but I do sincerely hope and trust that you, who have known the work of the Federal Structure Committee, and who know the value of that Committee, will see either that the Federal Structure Committee continues to exist and to carry on its work of hammering out a constitution and filling in the details which yet remain to be filled in, and to make investigations, or that you will bring into existence something equivalent to that Committee.

Lord Chancellor, I know that the hints which are thrown out from the Bench are sometimes much more significant than the judgments which are given at the end; and, if one may take the hint that you threw out on the last occasion, that you hoped to see us in India, a hint which was so readily seized by His Highness the Nawab Sahib of Bhopal, I will tell you that, great though your work has been as Chairman and guiding genius of this Committee, yet there is greater work awaiting you in India. Come to India with your experts and with your colleagues; try to explore further avenues; try to bring about a settlement on questions which remain yet to be settled; and then you will find that your work during the last twelve months is rewarded amply with success on your side and with gratitude on ours.

Lord Chancellor, if the Prime Minister had been present here I should have reminded him of a sentence in his speech, the last sentence in his speech, which, to my mind, really gave a true message to India last year, a sentence to which, speaking for myself, I attach far more importance than I do to the formal and precise language of the declaration. I will venture to read that sentence now:

> "Finally, I hope, and I trust, and I pray that by our labours together India will come to possess the only thing which she now lacks to give her the status of a Dominion amongst the British Commonwealth of Nations—what she now lacks for that—the responsibilities and the cares, the burdens and the difficulties, but the pride and the honour of responsible self-government."

Now, it is for that pride and for that honour of responsible self-government that I plead with you, and I do say that there can be nothing more disastrous at the present juncture in India than that the impression should go abroad that the plighted word of a British Prime Minister is not going to be honoured. I sincerely hope and trust that that never will be the case. I sincerely hope and trust that you will satisfy the expectations which you have raised and which we are entitled so legitimately and so rightly to entertain. An expectant India is waiting for the message from the Prime Minister. I hope that message to-morrow morning will be a message of hope, a message of good cheer, a message of encouragement, and a message which will be a turning-point in the relations between England and India.

Diwan Bahadur Raghaviah: It was my pleasing duty at the first Session of the Conference to assist, as adviser, my distinguished friend Sir Mirza Ismail, who then represented, besides his own State of Mysore, the States of Travancore, Cochin and Pudukotah. It is my privilege now, as representing the latter three States, to take part directly in the final deliberations of the Conference, and I propose to make my few remarks with special reference to these States.

The momentous outcome of the deliberations of the first Session of this Conference was the conviction that a federal constitution in which the Indian States and the British Indian Provinces could work as co-equal partners was the happiest way of uniting the two Indias which though politically distinct have common racial, cultural and other affinities, the States being given the necessary guarantees as to their sovereignty and integrity their direct relations with the Crown in certain matters and the continuance of India within the British Commonwealth of Nations.

The three States which I have the honour to represent fully share this conviction.

The Federal Structure Committee which was set up to give a concrete shape to this conviction has, under the wise guidance of the Lord Chancellor, submitted valuable Reports—the result of great Labour and thought and vision, and I may say on behalf of my States that they are in general agreement with the main principles enunciated in the Committee's Reports.

At the same time, the important maritime States of Travancore and Cochin, and the State of Pudukotah to a lesser degree, have special treaty and other rights which require recognition and it may be that there are other matters requiring examination and redress, all of which will have to follow the labours of the States' Committee and the fact-finding Committee which are proposed to be set up. I have no misgivings that these settlements will be impossible and let me hope that they will be easy. It is only then that these States will be able to visualise their position financial and otherwise and decide in regard to federation. It is needless to enumerate these rights and reservations here. But I shall allude briefly to certain other important matters dealt with in the recommendations of the Federal Structure Committee and the Finance sub-Committee, on which the States I represent wish to express their views at this juncture.

The most important of these is the question of the extent of representation which these States will get in the Federal Legislature in which they will have to play their part in the event of their entering the Federation. Travancore is a front-rank State, third in point of population and fourth in revenue among the Indian States, and in the very forefront in educational and political advance. Her population exceeds five millions, and her sons and daughters are among the most educated in India. Her administration is progressive and up to date. And she was the first Indian State to give her people a share in legislation by creating a Legislative Council so far

back as 1888, as she was the first to confer on that Council the largest measure of constitutional power ten years ago. Her Legislative Council was the first in India in which a woman member sat. As Dr. Datta has handsomely observed, she affords equal opportunities to all her subjects irrespective of caste or creed. But Travancore has been suffering from one disadvantage which I shall state in the words of His Highness the young Maharaja who, in assuming the Rulership of the State early this month, said:—" Situated as it is in the southermost corner in India and isolated in many respects from the rest of the sub-continent, Travancore, in spite of its all-round progress, its population of five millions and its revenue of nearly two-and-a-half crores, and its achievements and aspirations, is not so well known in India and England as one would legitimately expect." It is the contention of Travancore that this disadvantage should not be allowed to affect the place in the all-India Federation to which she is entitled by the merits of her case, and she will not be satisfied with any position which is less than that of Mysore in the Federal Upper House.

Cochin is another important maritime State which has reached a very high standard of educational, administrative and political advance, and she equally with Travancore allows the utmost liberty and opportunity to all her subjects irrespective of caste or creed. Her population is more than a million, and she will not be satisfied unless she gets individual representation in both Houses of the Federal Legislature.

I also represent at this Conference the State of Pudukotah which, though falling under the category of smaller States, exercises sovereign powers, enjoys a salute, is administered on modern lines and possesses a Legislature containing a substantial non-official element, and is therefore entitled to special consideration.

In order that the legitimate claims of Indian States, large and small, for adequate representation in the Federal Houses may have reasonable scope, I would venture to press the view that the strength of the Federal Upper House should be fixed at three hundred and that of the Lower House at four hundred and fifty. The advantages of offering reasonable scope for as many States as possible, both directly and in suitable groups, and with adequate weightage for the larger States, to participate in the work of the Federal Legislature sufficiently outweigh, in my opinion, the disadvantages attached to numerically large Houses. It cannot after all be said that legislative bodies, three hundred and four hundred and fifty strong, are too big for a country of the size and importance of India.

The Finance sub-Committee's proposal that tributes paid by certain States, now styled cash-contributions, should be wiped out will be received with great satisfaction, and I beg to fully associate myself with the views and sentiments expressed by His Highness the Chancellor of the Chamber of Ruling Princes, and by Sir Mirza Ismail in regard to this subject.

One of the suggestions made by the Finance sub-Committee is to federalise corporation-tax on companies and the revenue from commercial stamps. The States I represent are opposed to this proposal. Apart from the objection to them as direct taxes, income-tax and corporation-tax are the only expanding sources of revenue which will enable these States with an inelastic land revenue and other uncertain revenue resources, to meet the growing demands of a progressive administration. Commercial stamps, relating to commercial transactions within the States are, irrespective of the revenue they yield, a mark of sovereignty which the States would be unwilling to surrender.

I have a word to say in regard to the list of federal subjects drawn up during the first Session of this Conference. It is proposed to treat inland waterways affecting more than one federal Unit (including Shipping and Navigation) as federal for purposes of policy and legislation. A network of inland waterways connecting with the backwaters is a feature which Travancore and Cochin possess in common with only a few other parts of India. Although the inland waterways I speak of connect these two States with each other and with the British-Indian districts of Malabar, their character is different, say, from the big river systems traversing the length and breadth of India, and they may safely be excluded from being federalised. To the States, they form important internal trade routes in whose control and development they are vitally interested, and as they cover considerable portions of their territories, their federalisation would create serious jurisdictional and other difficulties of a practical nature. Cochin is entirely opposed to having her inland waterways federalised, while Travancore would retain in regard to hers, legislation as well as administration.

In regard to lighthouses, Travancore and Cochin agree to policy and legislation being federal, but would retain administration and jurisdiction in their own hands.

As regards aerial navigation, the States which I represent trust that they will be free to exercise their sovereignty over their own territories, subject only to necessary restrictions and safeguards in fulfilment of international obligations.

The States I represent would wish to possess the power of concurrent legislation on federal matters, so as to adapt Federal legislation to local conditions, so long as it is not inconsistent with Federal Legislation.

Before I conclude, please permit me, Sir, speaking on my own behalf, to say that, although my lot has been cast for the last forty years in the humbler and less spectacular field of administration, my knowledge of my country has convinced me, as it has the distinguished Rulers, Ministers, and politicians of India who have gathered round this table, that the India of to-day will not be satisfied with a form of government without responsibility at the Centre, and that the only way of reconciling young India with the idea of

safeguards necessary in the interests of India herself, is to give her immediately as large a measure of responsibility at the Centre as will redound to the credit of true statesmanship. A federation which will shoulder such responsibility will, I firmly believe, be both advantageous and honourable, and I pray the two Indias will, with the aid of British statesmanship, and with tolerance, goodwill and mutual understanding, strive to bring it early into being.

Dr. Shafa'at Ahmad Khan: My Lord, the empty benches here on all sides show that we have to be very brief; otherwise we shall be taxing the patience of the House. My Lord, I do not wish to cover the ground which has been traversed by the previous speakers; but I should like to make a few points for the consideration of the Conference. Before I deal with these points, I should like to pay my tribute of praise to the courtesy, the kindness, and the geniality of the Chairman of the Federal Structure Committee. I am sure I am voicing the sentiments of the entire British Indian Delegation when I say that the work he has done for the arrangement of the Indian Constitution and the pains he has taken will ever remain memorable in the history of India.

My Lord, the task of constitution-making for a Continent like India is by no means easy. The task of reconciling the divergent interests and the claims of various communities and classes is admittedly a very difficult one. But, so far as the constitutional aspect of our problem is concerned, I think I am right in saying that the Federal Structure Committee has tried to solve the difficulty in the only way in which it can be solved; that is to say, by the way of compromise, give and take and sweet willingness to concede points on both sides. Your Lordship has contributed in no mean degree to the success of the Federal Structure Committee. It was, indeed, with great regret that the Muslim Delegates refrained from participating in the discussion of External Relations, Financial Safeguards, Defence and Commercial Discrimination. This attitude of the Delegates is likely to be misunderstood and I should like to explain our reasons for it.

Before I left Allahabad on the 14th August, we had a meeting of the Muslim Conference on the 9th, and at that meeting a resolution was passed which is binding on the whole Muslim community, and by which resolution we abide. The spirit of that resolution was to the effect that, unless and until the Muslim demands were reasonably met, the Muslim Delegates should not participate in any discussion of any question concerning the responsibility at the Centre. I claim, My Lord, and I think I can claim with justification and with complete agreement on the part of all sensible people, that without the settlement of this question it is quite impossible, not only for Muslims, but really for any minority, to discuss any question concerning, for instance, defence, financial safeguards, or any other fundamental issue bearing directly or indirectly on responsibility at the Centre. My reason is, that if any question of such a kind is discussed, we shall be confronted at almost every step by a

problem which can only be solved when the communal problem is solved.

I will give an example. Take the powers of the Federal Legislature. You cannot discuss the powers of the Federal Legislature, or of the Federal Ministry, unless you know the *composition* of the Legislature. Before I am willing to confer any power on the Legislature I must know what the personnel, the composition of this Legislature is; before I agree to vesting that Legislature with that power I must know that I have got men in whom I have confidence; I must know that they are persons who will carry out my policy. So that it is for this reason, which I hope will be understood as indubitably sound, that we could not participate in the discussion. I hope it will not be regarded as a mark of discourtesy to our popular Chairman but will be regarded as the bounden duty of all the Muslim Delegates to abide by the mandate which they have received. We are, in this matter, acting in accord with the sentiment and the policy of the whole Muslim community.

This policy, My Lord, had not only been enunciated by the Muslims, but also agreed to by other communities. If I remember rightly, Mr. Gandhi, before he left India, had also preached the absolute necessity of settling the communal question before the discussion of a purely constitutional question could be launched, and Mr. Gandhi did this in Delhi in March. I think he stuck to it until the middle of July, when he was obliged, as he has explained in "Young India," to give up that point and to come to the Conference in order to arrange a compromise between the different interests.

Therefore, My Lord, we are not alone in this contention. Our claim is based strictly upon equity, upon justice, upon the place we have occupied in the India of the past, and the position we now occupy in some of the most strategic places in the vast sub-continent.

My Lord, Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru has eloquently described the results achieved by the Federal Structure Committee during the second Session of this Conference. I have no hesitation in saying that when the work of this Committee is properly assessed it will be found that we have covered a very wide ground in the best possible manner. We have dealt with the very difficult and extremely complex subject of Federal Finance. We have also solved the very intricate question of the Federal judicature. We have come to almost unanimous conclusions—with the exception of two or three very important points—on the question of the relations of the two Houses.

When we think of the importance and momentous nature of the entire task entrusted to us, these three subjects which I have just enumerated may seem insignificant and even immaterial; but I submit, My Lord, that when a proper perspective of the work done by the Conference is attained, it will be found that our reports on

those subjects—I cannot deal with the other subjects—will form a durable foundation for a sound and solid constitution for India.

My Lord, it is now admitted that the idea of federation, which was regarded merely as a dream last year, is now reality. It is not merely a reality; it is a tremendous reality. It is a fact which challenges all preconceived notions, a fact which is bound to have tremendous importance in every sphere of our public life, a fact which, when fully worked out with regard to finance, judiciary and other subjects, will mould the destinies of millions of people for generations. And so, My Lord, I attach supreme importance to the way in which the principle of federation has been consistently applied last year and this year. I have been and am in complete agreement with the principle of federation, as I believe it is only by the co-operation, help, advice and assistance of the Princes, together with the peoples of British India, that a solid foundation and lasting unity for India can be found, and the fundamental divisions which now exist removed, so that we may build up an India which will be a source of pride to Asia and an ornament to humanity.

But, Sir, though I agree with the principle of federation, I differ on a few minor details, and one point, which I have made clear, is that we cannot give to the Princes any weightage in either House of the Legislature. They can only claim representation in the Lower House as in the Upper House by population. Again, I have made it clear in my speech that I want the representatives of the Indian States to the Assembly to be elected, although I am not averse to their nomination, in the transitional stage, to the Upper House. It is clear, however, My Lord, that though the principle of federation has been applied, though every party has agreed to the idea, it will take a long time before it can be worked out consistently to its minutest details. Mr. Lees-Smith, in one of his speeches before the Committee, said it would take three years. I cannot say exactly how long it will take, but I think I am not far wrong in saying that it cannot take less than about three years. Ordinarily that would not be a long time in the history of the Provinces of India or in the history of India itself. It is on the other hand a very long time at a period when we are passing through crisis after crisis—crises on various matters economical, political, social and others. It is perfectly clear to everybody who has had any experience that if we are really desirous of removing the grievances from which many of the Provinces suffer that it is absolutely essential that something should be done immediately to satisfy their legitimate claims. Take for instance the Frontier Province which has been waiting eleven years. Lord Reading will remember that it was under his auspices and with his advice and assistance that the Bray Committee was appointed, and all of us know the interest he took and continues to take in the deliberations of that Committee. He knows the intensity and the volume of demand for Provincial autonomy in that Province. She has been waiting expectant, ask-

ing the British Government to do justice to her claims. She has done that for eleven years, and it seems as if she may have to wait for years more. I do not know what the consequences of that long delay might be, not only on the political programme of the Muslims but also on the entire political policy of India. The Frontier Province cannot wait. She is determined not to wait. It is absolutely essential that satisfaction should be given to the people of that Province by conferring on them Provincial autonomy without delay. Take other Provinces. It was in 1924 that I urged Provincial autonomy. Since that time every year almost in my own Provincial Legislature the demand for Provincial autonomy has been repeated with the monotony of a pneumatic drill. But nothing has been done.

In 1928 when we asked for autonomy we were told that the Simon Commission had then been appointed. I co-operated with that Commission for two years. We were told that we must wait. For two more years we waited. The recommendations to that Commission were published last year. Then we had the Round Table Conference. That means we have now waited altogether for four years. Now we are told that we must not have any Provincial autonomy, that we should not have it until and unless it is coupled with responsibility at the Centre.

If it had been merely the question of responsibility in British India that would have been an easy task. All there would be to do would be to transfer a number of reserved subjects. But this is not the type of Provincial autonomy we want or the type of Provincial autonomy that anyone who knows the nature of the position will want, because the Provincial autonomy we desire is provincial autonomy of a general kind, Provincial autonomy conferring complete power consistent with the relation of the Provinces to the Centre. If we want really to go ahead, we must in any case tell the Provinces, those parts of India which have been doing their best for the working of the reform within the last eleven years, that that can be provided immediately, in order that they might work out the various social, economic and educational problems which have been waiting for solution for so many years, and in the meanwhile during the next three years all the details of the operation can be got out, and I see no reason why, immediately after the Conference is over, adequate machinery should not be set up to guarantee to all persons that this idea will be applied without the least possible delay, that India will not have to wait long, but, on the other hand, that in three years' time it will be possible to have a constitution. You can give an assurance; I know how difficult it is to press a time limit for the solution of a problem of such a character, but I do say that if you really give constitutional government to India, responsible government must be dealt with when the arrangements are considered, and if your arrangements are adequate and are really necessary, then in that case I submit India will be satisfied, the Provinces will go ahead and work out their scheme of education

and a number of other problems, and a very important point to me and to everybody—I am speaking solely about the work of a Provincial Legislature—I know how important the beneficial effect is upon Ministers who are responsible to the Provincial Legislatures and who have a new sense of responsibility, which has a very moderating influence upon the political programme, even in the most extreme part of India. As far as this question is concerned, I repeat that we must go ahead on the one hand, with complete adequate machinery for the carrying out of this principle and applying it in the form of a constitution with the least possible delay. On the other hand we cannot let the Provinces wait, and I do say now that the Provinces have been waiting too long, since 1924. Therefore go ahead with the Provinces and at the same time carry out the promises, the pledges which have been given by the Prime Minister on 19th January, 1931.

My Lord, before I sit down I should like just to draw the attention of the Conference to the peculiar position of the Muslims in the United Provinces, whom I have the honour to represent here along with my other colleagues. The Muslim community in the United Provinces is a minority of 14·8 per cent. Though they are merely 15 per cent., they hold their own in various spheres. In the public services, if Your Lordship will look at the work done by the Muslims in the Executive Services, you will find that they have been really the backbone of the entire administration for decades. In higher education also they held their own, they do not want any privileges. They do not want any monopolies; they do not want any special rights. I say this with a due sense of responsibility: they desire a fair field and no favour. They only wish to keep the amount of weightage, the amount of representation that they have got. This representation is not the result, as is sometimes said, of the Lucknow Pact of 1916—not at all. This representation was granted to them by Lord Minto in 1906. So that the claim made by certain sections that the Muslims enjoy in the United Provinces 30 per cent. by virtue of the Lucknow Pact is not sound, because, after all it is not based upon that Pact. It can be traced back to 1906 when Lord Minto acknowledged the political importance of the Muslims. I want to place all my cards on the table. It is true that a number of Muslims were apprehensive as to the result of the grant of complete Provincial autonomy. But we have never on any platform, on any occasion, or in the Legislature, opposed complete Provincial autonomy in my own Province. We have never wished to put a spoke in the wheel of progress either on the Provincial side or on the Central side. We say that if our rights are safeguarded, we shall be willing to come forward and help in the building up of the foundations of a sound constitution for India.

With these words, My Lord, I hope the Conference will take into account my suggestions regarding the grant of immediate Provincial autonomy, coupled with pledges and earnest promises of responsible government.

Sir Akbar Hydari: Mr. Chairman, before I say the few words I have to say about the work of this Conference, I would like to give expression to the great debt which we owe to you, to the members of the present Government, to the members of the late Government, and to the members of the Government which preceded it who have devoted so great, so constant, and so sympathetic attention to our work amidst all their other great preoccupations—work which you and we the representatives of Great Britain and India have set ourselves jointly to perform.

I am, as Indian standards go, not exactly in the prime of youth, but age has not damped my spirits nor my optimism. I will in as few words as I can endeavour to show why there is no need either for uneasiness or for depression amongst us who desire a happy and contented India as a partner in the British Commonwealth of Nations. In the first place, the idea and the ideal of an all-India Federation not only still holds the field, but, if anything, it has been more firmly entrenched in our minds than it was when it was originally mooted at the first Session of the last Conference.

We of the Indian States Delegation have not wavered in our loyalty to and support of the federal idea, as providing the only satisfactory and safe avenue for the orderly march of India to full nationhood. Rumours have been circulated that this State or that State has been working against federation. We have treated these rumours with the contempt they deserve. I can honestly say that so far as I am concerned I have all along worked for the construction of a stable, satisfactory federal structure into which the Indian States can usefully come; and if at any time my intervention in matters, especially those connected with federal finance, or the size of the Federal Legislature, or the relations between the two Houses, or the constitution of the Federal Government, or the subjects with which alone they can deal, may have been considered inconvenient by some of the Delegates, I say, with all the sincerity at my command, that it was not meant to be obstructive, but helpful.

One word more, whilst I am on this subject. In the Federal Structure Committee I have made it repeatedly and abundantly clear that it is in the best interests of all concerned that the strength of the Federal Legislature should be kept as low as possible. I must not take up the time of this Conference in attempting to reply again to the arguments of my friends, whether on this side or on the other side of the House, who, in order to give what they think will ensure individual representation to the larger and to the smaller States, are asking for a large Legislature. The constitution of the Federal Legislature is a matter to which not only Hyderabad but many other important States attach vital importance. It is so vital that on a right decision in regard to it may depend Hyderabad's attitude towards an all-India Federation.

Whilst we of the Indian States look up to you in British India in many matters, I will pray you not to think that we have no con-

tribution to make towards a common pool. We are Indian India. We are autonomous; we administer ourselves; we run our own show. As a result, we have an experience of government, of the need for compromise and of the management of affairs which you, our brethren across the frontier, should not lightly thrust aside.

For an all-India Federation to come into being, various outstanding questions have to be examined. For example, the number of States who are willing to join an all-India Federation, their representation *inter se*, the position of the States who do not come in, what the franchise in British India should be, the financial settlement, and so on. These will take time, but I do not at all agree with those who consider that no step forward whatever should be taken pending the examination and settlement of these questions, which, owing to their complexity, and involving as they do delicate adjustments and negotiations, may take a considerable time. In my opinion, it will be dangerous to stand still and do nothing but exploratory work.

Unfortunately, the minorities question must be settled first. That goes without saying, and it will probably fall to the lot of the Government to deal with it. Once that is settled, is Provincial autonomy alone possible until the scheme of an all-India Federation is worked out? Is it not possible to try in the intervening stage to see whether even the foundations of an all-India Federation cannot also be well laid whilst the external decoration and internal furnishing of the structure is being worked out and completed? I therefore offer a suggestion, for what it may be worth, that the possibility and the desirability of taking some such steps as the following whilst the final structure is being completed may be carefully considered. Simultaneously with the grant of Provincial autonomy reconstruct the Centre on the lines of the all-India Federal Centre. Let there be at the Centre, along with the necessary safeguards and reservations, as much responsibility in those subjects which we have already agreed to be federal, when the all-India Federation comes into being, as is constitutionally possible in view of the constitutional position of the Indian States and the necessity therefore of paying due regard to their views. For this purpose in anticipation of the completion of the all-India Federal scheme I would provide for some temporary machinery—purely temporary I repeat—until the federal structure is completed. For example, a joint Standing Committee selected from both the Houses of the Indian Legislature which would have to remain as at present constituted, with which would be associated representatives of the Chamber of Princes and of those States who have not joined the Chamber. Such a Committee would advise the Viceroy on such subjects within the province of the Central Legislature as concern Indian States as well as British India. There is one more matter with which I wish to deal and I have done.

It will have been noted that whenever questions have come up before the Federal Structure Committee concerning British-Indian Provinces I have always entered a caveat in respect of Berar. I do not say anything more because what we have to say to the Crown on this subject and *vice versâ* is not a matter which falls within the purview of the Conference. There is, however, one aspect of the matter in regard to which I think it is my duty to inform the Conference at this its Plenary Session so that any doubt as to our real intention in the matter may be removed. Whilst safeguarding his rights His Exalted Highness I know wishes to accord to his subjects of Berar as great a measure of autonomy as may be found possible for the British-Indian Provinces. Mr. President, I have done. I have full faith that under God's Providence the labours on which we entered last year will come to a happy fruition.

Mrs. Subbarayan: As we are about to part after three months' hard work I think it is but fitting for us to review the work that has been done and take stock of the situation. It is for this reason that I wish to make a few remarks, although as a member of the Federal Structure Committee I have had opportunities to express my views there, and I can assure you I shall be very brief. First let me say that I am very glad that the Federal Structure Committee has not only reiterated its faith in a federation for India but has made great advance in the development of that great project. I hold now, as I have always held, that federation is the sure and swift road to our national development. I have felt greatly encouraged by the Lord Chancellor's farewell remarks at the Federal Structure Committee on Friday and by the remarks of His Highness the Nawab of Bhopal on Saturday morning. I hope the Rulers of other Indian States too will cultivate the faith that His Highness the Nawab of Bhopal so strongly holds. It was also very heartening this morning, My Lord, to hear your clear expression of views about this ideal for India, and Mr. Benn's appeal this afternoon. If I may say so, the voice of the Liberal and Labour Parties have brought a message of bright hope in an atmosphere which is liable to be as uncertain as your English November.

Closely allied to federation is that difficult question of responsibility at the Centre, and interwoven with it is the complicated problem of safeguards. I confess that I am not versed in all the technical details of these safeguards, but as a lay person I hold strong views on the general principles that should govern these safeguards, and since I accepted this responsible task of serving on this Conference I have given much thought, I may even say study, to the question of these safeguards, and I hope the Conference will bear with me while I place these views before them.

I hold the general view that India should be complete mistress of her own house, but I am enough of a realist to appreciate that there may be practical difficulties in effecting the immediate and complete transfer of power in certain matters like defence. There

may be difficulties owing to present conditions. It has been pointed out to us that owing to our lack of a national army, technical knowledge, lack of technical training—though I must say not due to any fault of our own—it may be necessary to have some special provisions to regulate the transfer of power from the Governor-General to the Indian Legislature, but I also feel that these special provisions should be only for the brief transitional period through which we shall have to pass.

Practical difficulties and inexperience, however, cannot be alleged to anything like the same extent in financial and economic matters. In spite of irresponsible statements made by some people in India, as in other countries (and I think there are people in all countries who make irresponsible statements), I do believe that there is a strong sense of financial responsibility and of the great value of financial stability and credit in my country. Certain instances in the present legislatures should not be cited to prove the contrary. I am convinced that the conditions that exist now in our present legislatures are purely temporary and innate in a form of government where the legislature has full power of criticism but no responsibility, but when we have full responsible government the legislatures of India will be the trustees of the people of India and not irresponsible critics. It will be their duty to maintain the financial stability and the credit of their country and to develop its economic policy. To do this they must have a free hand. It is for this reason that I feel we should not bind our future legislators and posterity to any particular policy. We should not bind them down by strict rules which in a rapidly changing world may become serious checks on the economic development of India. We have been warned that every nation may be obliged to have safeguards in a world condition like the present one, and that you here in England have been obliged to impose stringent safeguards on yourselves. I quite appreciate the importance of safeguards in difficult times; and I would only ask that our legislature should also have the same freedom as you have here to impose safeguards according to the exigencies of the times. If we impose safeguards now according to the conditions that exist now, they may make it difficult for the future legislatures to cope with any special emergency that may arise. Their powers should be unfettered to deal with any difficult situation, and they should be free to judge what is best in the interests of India without any outside interference. I would therefore urge that the financial and commercial safeguards in our future constitution should be reduced to a minimum and should be no more than what we find in most constitutions. I would repeat what I have said before, that if we are to have the loyal support of the Indian public in working and developing the new constitution, we should not have galling restrictions in our constitution which will only provoke resistance.

Here I would like to appeal to our British colleagues, and I do it in all friendliness, to appreciate the fact, unpalatable though it

be, that there is a strong suspicion in India about the interference of Whitehall and Westminster. The greater the elimination of these elements of our future constitution, the greater is the hope of a loyal acceptance of the constitution and of permanent friendship and confidence between Great Britain and India.

Then, My Lord, comes the question of minorities. While I deeply deplore that there has been no settlement of this most difficult problem, I strongly feel that that is not the final word about it. I am sure it is possible to achieve a settlement based on reason; it must be achieved, whether it is from inside or from outside. I will not say more on this subject, as I have already expressed my views on it before. I would only add that the present non-settlement of this question should not be used as an argument to check the political advance of my country, and it should not be used as an argument for introducing political reforms in India by stages. It has been convincingly pointed out at this Conference by various speakers that the communal question affects the Provinces even more than it does the Centre. If it is settled for the Provinces, then there is no difficulty about the Centre.

This reminds me of the fears, hopes and anxieties that we from India entertain about the future of our country, and I would just like to say a few words about them. We are nearing the end of the second Session of this Conference. The last word will be uttered by the Government to-morrow. Whatever that last word be, that will be the deciding factor of the situation, and on it will depend the future of our country. Last year when we came to this Conference we had grave doubts and fears, to which reference has already been made, but when we concluded we had grounds for hope. This year, however, various circumstances have developed which have caused us grave uneasiness. There has been a cumulation of rumours and of unfavourable coincidences which have made this uneasiness grow into anxiety. It is generally feared that the Government is going to implement the pledge that it gave on the 19th January by immediate action only in the Provinces, and by a vague promise of introducing responsibility at the Centre at some uncertain and indefinite date. Apart from the constitutional complications of such a course, I am sure that this will cause the most bitter disappointment in India, and I fear to contemplate its possible repercussions. Such considerations, My Lord, have caused us serious apprehension, and we have not hesitated to give expression to it. But I would appeal to my British friends not to consider that expression of apprehension as mere excitement or emotionalism. I want to be frank, but in my frankness I have a genuine desire for friendship, and therefore I hope my British friends will not misunderstand me when I say that perhaps it is difficult for them to appreciate the anxieties—it is no exaggeration to say the torturing anxieties—of the representatives of a country whose fate hangs in the balance. In our statements on this matter, as on all matters we have discussed in this Conference, we have spoken with a full sense of responsibility and with the sole desire to settle the Indian

problem, and to settle the future relationship between our two countries by mutual goodwill and agreement.

The Secretary of State gave us an assurance last Wednesday that the Government has not made up its mind, and that there were no grounds for our fears. That gave us some relief. The remarks made by the Lord Chancellor on Friday last in the Federal Structure Committee, and on Saturday here, revived our hopes, but we are still uncertain, though we hope that the Government will implement its pledges not only to the letter but also in the spirit in which they were given and were accepted.

We hope that the Government in its pronouncement to-morrow will give us a clear idea as to the future procedure, that it will tell us its definite proposals and also give us an approximate time-table for carrying out those proposals.

There is one other point, My Lord, which I forgot to mention, and to which I desire briefly to refer. I am here, like all my colleagues, as an Indian, but I cannot altogether forget that I am a woman also, and so I should like to ask the Government constantly to bear in mind, when they are planning and drafting our future constitution, the interests of women, who form nearly one-half of the population of India.

Finally, My Lord, as a keen lover of trees I should like to remind the Conference of the plant to which the Lord Chancellor made reference at the last Conference. The seed of that plant was sown here by the Prime Minister and the British Government, and I should here like to pay a tribute to Mr. Wedgwood Benn for the part he played in the sowing of it. You and we have helped to tend it. The plant has now grown stronger, and India is anxiously awaiting the transplanting of that plant to her soil. We want that plant to be transplanted as early as possible, and in its entirety, roots and all, and not partially. It is only then that this plant will flourish and grow up into a large tree, under whose cool and deep shade all our people will live in prosperity and contentment.

As I said last year I am sure that this tree will be an emblem of wise statesmanship and permanent friendship between Great Britain and India.

Mr. Jamal Muhammad: I ask for indulgence as one of the latest nominees to this Conference and as one who had not the privilege of serving on any of the Committees. I take it, Sir, that we have been invited to come here for the consideration and construction of the future constitution of New India, if I may say so, in all its aspects as laid down by the Prime Minister in his speech of January last, when he closed the first Session of this Conference. That speech put a new faith into some of us in India, and we took it that this time the British Government and the British Parliament meant business. If you do not mind my saying so, Sir, some who were rather disinclined to attend the first Conference took the earliest opportunity to come here when invitations were extended to them for the second Session. What was the main idea of the Round

Table Conference? The idea was that both Indian and British Delegates should discuss and thrash out among other things the constitution of an all-India Federation, the main feature of which would be responsibility at the Centre, with safeguards in the interests of India, to enable the British Cabinet, of which the Prime Minister was and is the trusted and respected head, to put through Parliament the necessary Bill at the earliest opportunity to give effect to the solemn pledges given by two of England's great and farseeing statesmen on behalf of its Government and people—a people deservedly famous for their love of liberty and championing of the weak. I refer to the Prime Minister as well as to Lord Irwin, the great ex-Viceroy who represented His Gracious Majesty our Sovereign King-Emperor. Not only members of the British India delegation with almost one voice advocated, pleaded, and supported this all-India Federation idea, but it had also been affirmed and re-affirmed by that wise and patriotic son of India, His Highness the Nawab of Bhopal, the Chancellor of the Princes' Chamber, and by the admirable speech of Sir Manubhai Mehta, the representative of that other great and noble Prince, His Highness The Maharaja of Bikaner.

May I submit to you, with all humility but with all the emphasis I can command, that India and its people—the Agricultural, Commercial, Industrial and Labour classes of India—will not be satisfied with anything less than the granting of responsibility at the Centre simultaneously with Provincial autonomy. Both of these should be started together and by the same Bill.

When you thus satisfy the legitimate desire and aspirations of a great people—in the inculcating of which your own people played no mean part, you will at the same time also be putting, once for all, an end to the deplorable but widespread discontent and unrest in the country. The lasting gratitude and good will of a grateful people thus earned is worth something indeed.

Let it also be remembered that India has a large and rapidly growing population, and that it is a country rich with natural resources scarcely yet tapped and developed, but in the utilisation and development of which your assistance, mental and material, will be much sought after. May I venture to suggest to you therefore, with all humility, that it may be worth your while to secure and cultivate the goodwill of this India of the future.

Sir, I will just say a few words, with due apologies to the Prime Minister, about the safeguards before I close as some at least of those sitting round this table seem to be unduly worrying themselves about them. My Lord, I know that the Prime Minister heartily detests and dislikes that word, and, as he has rightly interpreted, it is an ugly word to us, naturally rousing great suspicions in our hearts by its past associations. However, I cannot help slightly touching upon them, if for no other reason at least because of the fact that they had been looming rather too largely in the deliberations of the Committees.

Everyone of the Indian Delegation has assured you in the plainest language possible that in India, noted for its tolerant spirit, there shall be no discrimination against race, creed or colour. All that is meant is that India, like other countries, should have certain reserve powers for use in case of need, and only then, and not otherwise. Perhaps my countrymen are a bit over-anxious about these reserve powers. But I beg to point out that they have some justification for this anxiety by their unhappy experiences when they stepped into such ventures as shipping, insurance, etc. If at least in the future the vast resources and organisations of the non-national concerns are not brought to bear to throttle and kill the small ventures of Indians in their own country, I do not see why anyone should fight shy of these reserve powers, which every State possesses, implied or declared. We do not want to injure even a foreigner in our country, and that being so why should there be any doubt or distrust of us in the mind of the Britisher who has done something for us, to awaken us from our long slumber, and with whom we have, and God Almighty willing we will continue to have, so many ties common to us all as members of the British Commonwealth of Nations.

The question of the security or right of property has also been raised in the discussions. We Indians have also properties of our own. My Lord, will you allow me to say it, that we know it only too well that the security of property is the very foundation of ordered society, and that no nation can go forward in its onward march if the spirit of venture and endeavour is sapped at the very basis.

As regards financial safeguards, all, particularly agricultural, industrial and commercial classes, are united and insistent on having no safeguards whatever in this respect. We want absolute and full financial control. In the discussions of the Federal Structure Committee it was stated that there should be safeguards with a view to helping India in its borrowings. They referred to credit confidence and that sort of thing in this connection. Well they would like us to believe that we would be in a bad position with regard to borrowing. Really there should be more confidence in the investing public when India herself guarantees such loans. After all the Secretary of State is only an agent. When you have the principal herself standing for it, why should you not trust her?

What about your lending out money even to the small unstable republics in South America. Will you not then trust us, a nation of three hundred and fifty millions with vast resources, a people of honour, and, moreover, partly trained by yourselves?

Again, let me remind you, My Lord, that our national debts were not so heavy before the Great War; they were comparatively smaller; but since then it has accumulated. That is more due to the wrong currency and exchange policy of the Government. And, further, we feel that in the future we may not be requiring so much help from others. Even if we do require help, I think India and its people are quite good enough as securities. Then something

was said about funds not being made sufficiently available for defence. Well, I would just like to say a few words on that. We should be fools if we kept our country undefended. We are more concerned in the defence of our country because we are more directly interested and we would be the first to suffer. After all, you are six thousand miles away, well-defended by your mighty Navy. If there is any attack on us from outside, we shall be the first to suffer, and you may take it that we would take pretty good care to keep ourselves well defended.

Then it was also said that funds may not be available to maintain sufficient troops for internal troubles. Well, we may have little quarrels now and then, just as in any other country or in any other community. There is some difference of opinion or quarrel; that may be so even among brothers. We may be quarrelling to-day, and to-morrow we may be all right. However, let me point out to you, Sir, that between ourselves we have more in common than there could be between Indians and the outside world, and if our own people suffer, we are likely to feel it much more than anybody outside.

My Lord, in this connection I would like to point out, that for centuries we were living in amity. It passes my comprehension why these troubles and quarrels should have developed only within the last few years; and even now these communal quarrels are rather uncommon in Indian States. I know recently there had been one or two little quarrels in Mysore and Kashmir; but, generally, it is not to be found in the Indian States. Moreover, there are many who feel that it is artificial and due to some mischief-makers or notoriety-seekers.

It may be urged that Indians have not enough experience and skill as financiers. In view of the manner in which Indian finances have been managed within the last few years, it is surprising that anybody should be bold enough to say that Indian financiers would do worse than British financiers or experts sent out to India.

Then there was some talk in the discussions about reserved powers as regards currency and exchange. It is a very bitter subject and the less said about it the better, because if, during the past few years anything did more to estrange, embitter and rouse the people in the country, it is this policy of the Government. That being so, the less said about it the better. Since the war, the policy of the Government, so far as exchange and currency are concerned, has been the worst that could be imagined; and, apart from the fact they commit serious blunders, the most unfortunate part of it is that they will not correct themselves in time. They will not listen to the appeals and pleading of the people; they merely say, " We have no open mind in the matter, we are going to use all the resources at our command to maintain the decisions we have already made."

Even recently, what happened? In spite of the fact that the whole country disapproved of the policy, and the Assembly recorded

its vote against it unanimously, as far as he non-officials were concerned, and even the Government of India, evidently getting tired of their old ratio policy wanted to get out of it, the Secretary of State, a gentleman by the way, who had newly come to his office, sitting here six thousand miles away—I do not want to attack him personally; it is the system I am talking about—dictates a certain policy and imposes it against the will of the people and the Assembly, and even of your own agents on the spot. That has given enough proof, if proof were needed, why there should be no such safeguards so far as exchange and currency are concerned. In fact, it is the best proof why that system should be done away with forthwith.

Then, My Lord, there is also the question of certification. There is no doubt that India is very poor, semi-starving, and heavily taxed. And there is a world depression and our revenues are falling. What is being done? The very revenue-yielding departments—commerce, industry and agriculture—are being more and more taxed, with the result that they yield progressively less and less revenues, and the Government will not retrench adequately in either their civil or their military expenditure.

So far as the military safeguards are concerned, we may be a little nervous about them. Though it may be a question of defence, it also means taxation, and in the case of the last Budget, against the twice recorded vote of the Assembly certification was resorted to, simply for a crore of rupees.

Under these circumstances, it is no wonder that we are rather nervous about these safeguards which are so much thought of here.

Mr. Ghuznavi: My Lord, when I was listening to the speech of my colleague, Mr. Fazl-ul-Huq, last Saturday, and when I heard the forcible, irrefutable arguments with which he put the Bengal-Muslim case before His Gracious Majesty's representatives, I thought, My Lord, that I might withdraw my name from the list of speakers, but on reflection I changed my mind, inasmuch as we are the only two representatives here of the Bengal Muslims, who represent twenty-eight millions out of the eighty millions of Muslims in India. The Muslim population of Bengal is double that of the Punjab, but the Punjab has six Muslim representatives here at this Conference. The United Provinces, where the Muslim population is 7,182,000, have four representatives here. Even Bihar, where the Muslim population is only 4,265,000, has three representatives. But Bengal, with its vast Muslim population, has only two representatives, and therefore I thought I should be failing in my duty if I did not speak.

My duty is to discuss these proceedings primarily as they affect my own Province of Bengal, but I must preface my remarks by saying that nothing in this speech is to be construed as inconsistent with the claims which we Muslims have put forward for safeguarding our position in the future. These claims are known and need

not therefore be repeated by me, but all that I am now saying must be read in the light of the condition that we Muslims will at no time and under no circumstances accept any constitution which does not embody the minimum safeguards which we genuinely believe to be absolutely vital to our welfare.

Since Lord Lothian's speech in the House of Lords the other day, the whole world is aware that a very dangerous state of affairs exists in my Province, as the result of terrorist activities. We ourselves have long been aware of these things and have pressed repeatedly upon our Government the necessity of taking vigorous action to combat the terrorists. Believe me, the most urgent need in Bengal to-day is for a Government which will ensure stability of conditions, the safety of property and the lives of law-abiding citizens, and of government officials. How many of the highest government officials have you lost during the last two years? If my memory does not fail me, the number is 17. Some have been murdered, some have been disabled and sent home, some have been forcibly asked to retire, because the Government could not give them a guarantee of security for their lives. That being so, I am compelled to remark on certain comments made by Mahatma Gandhi and by my old friend, the Pandit Malaviya, in recent speeches in the Federal Structure Committee. The Mahatma Gandhi himself condemns and deplores the terrorist movement, but his followers do not, and his remarks can be, and certainly will be, twisted by unscrupulous agitators to encourage the very course which he personally condemns. I must also mention the Pandit Malaviya's reference to the recent appointment of a new Governor for Bengal. He knows nothing of the new Governor, as he himself admits. Nevertheless, he did not scruple to refer to that appointment in a manner which cannot but inflame the feeling in extremists circles in Bengal and I fear it may very likely lead to trouble. I said a moment ago that Bengal's first need is for a firm and wise government. Pandit Malaviya's remarks are well calculated to make this impossible, or at any rate difficult of attainment. My Province, My Lord, is sufficiently unhappy without such efforts, and I would like to say in a friendly manner, My Lord, but with perfect frankness, that we shall be much better off if persons from outside refrain from interfering with our domestic affairs.

Here, My Lord, I might digress a moment and address my remarks to Mahatma Gandhi and Pandit Malaviya. The Corporation of Calcutta, which is the largest civic body in India, with the biggest income, amounting to six crores of rupees annually, has eighty per cent. of its members drawn from the Congress ranks. This civic body openly encourages these deeds of violence by going to the incredible length of passing resolutions of sorrow at the execution of proved and convicted assassins, and reproducing these resolutions in the most prominent place possible in the official gazette of the Corporation. I doubt, My Lord, if the whole civilised world can show any parallel to this monstrous state of affairs.

Here is, My Lord, the photographic reproduction of the front page of an issue of the Calcutta Municipal Gazette:—

"CORPORATION MEETING.

EXECUTION OF DINESH GUPTA.

Corporation's Tribute: Meeting Adjourns.

The Corporation of Calcutta expressed its sorrow at the execution of Dinesh Chandra Gupta and adjourned its meeting on Wednesday, the 8th July.

When the Corporation assembled, Councillor Bhupendra Nath Banerjee moved:—

'This Corporation records its sense of grief at the execution of Dinesh Chandra Gupta who sacrificed his life in the pursuit of his ideal.'

The House adopted the resolution standing.

On the motion of Councillor Madan Mohan Burman the meeting was adjourned till Friday, the 10th July.

The Mayor, in associating himself with the resolution, paid a tribute to the courage and devotion of the deceased."

This takes me to another very serious matter. The Calcutta Corporation has a number of free primary schools; they have about twenty thousand children and a thousand teachers to teach them. If the history of these teachers is ascertained, it will be found that they are recruited from the ranks of the political suspects. My Lord, you will be interested to know what these children are taught: the lesson of British hatred. Here is an English translation of a specimen lesson in the form of a song which the children sing. With Your Lordship's permission I will first express it in Bengali and then translate it:—

"One—two—three
India will be free
Four—five—six
Gandhi ki jai."

Pandit M. M. Malaviya: Amen.

Mr. Ghuznavi: I say "amen" also. Here I differ:

"Seven—eight—nine
We have to picket."

I do not say "amen" here. Here I differ. Then comes the worst, the British hatred:

"Ten—eleven—twelve
Catch hold of the Britisher and give him a thrashing."

Pandit M. M. Malaviya: The pity of it!

Mr. Ghuznavi: Now, My Lord, let me turn to the affairs of my own community. I need hardly point out how unfairly the Muslims have been treated during the last century and a half. A hundred years ago the Muslims occupied practically all the posts, both civil and military, in the Government; but later they were almost eliminated except in very subordinate positions. As far back as 1906 the Government issued circulars saying that Muslims should have a third of the number of posts in the public services; and this was repeated in 1914 and again in 1925. What was the result? The circulars have till to-day remained a dead letter and their suggestions have been completely frustrated. Now after the lapse of a quarter of a century there are branches of the public services in which the Muslim representation is as low as one per cent.; whilst in other branches it is three, or at the utmost five per cent. In short, My Lord, the British Government hitherto has treated the Muslims unfairly, and the time is now due when this state of affairs should be remedied. An examination of the Bengal Civil List will show that out of the seventeen High Court Judges in Bengal there is only one Muslim Judge.

Unfortunately, My Lord, I have not got a copy of the Bengal Civil List, but I have just had the two pages taken out from my diary to show you what is the position in the Bengal Secretariat and in other branches of the public service of Bengal. In the Accounts and Audit Department, the Accountant-General is a Hindu, the Deputy Accountant-General is another Hindu, the third Deputy Accountant-General is a third Hindu, the Examiner of Local Accounts is another Hindu, and the Collector of Calcutta is a Hindu. The Co-operative Society Registrar is a Hindu. The Coroner is a Hindu. The Commissioner of Excise and Salt is a Hindu. The Deputy Commissioner of Excise is a Hindu and the Assistant Commissioner is another Hindu. All are Hindus. There is not a single Muslim in the Bengal Secretariat, from one end to the other, holding a high post. This is, My Lord, a warning from a friend, but I beg of you not to underrate its seriousness on that account. Believe me, My Lord, for us it is a very serious matter indeed.

Let me now, My Lord, say a few words on more general political issues as they affect the Muslims in Bengal. Dr. Narendra Nath Law spoke of a large number of nationalist Muslims in Bengal, and regretted that they had no representatives at this Conference, and said they desired joint electorates. Let me tell Dr. Narendra Nath Law that there is no large number of such Muslims. Neither Dr. Law nor Dr. Moonje nor any other person can point to them and say where they are and who they are, for the simple but all-sufficient reason that they do not exist.

The Congress, My Lord, has gone through India with a fine-tooth comb to find such persons, and has never been able, up to now, to put forward more than a tiny handful of names, most of them of utterly obscure people, representing what they are pleased to call nationalist Muslim opinion. In a word, nationalist Muslim

opinion in this sense of opposition to the claims now being made by the Indian Muslims is a figment of the imagination. We demand separate electorates, and we will continue to demand them. We have them now.

We had them for over twenty years with considerable experience of their work and we believe them to be an absolute essential for our safety. This is the result of experience and not of mere opinion. With your permission I will just read a few passages quoted in the supplementary note by Sir Abdullah al-M'amun Suhrawardy, to the Report of the Indian Central Committee:

> "I do not believe that the Mussulman is the natural enemy of the Hindu . . . . . I have no desire to obtain Swaraj even if it were possible, by the sacrifice of a single legitimate interest of a single Minority."

(Mr. M. K. Gandhi in *Young India*, quoted in the Overseas Edition of *The Statesman*, September 19th, 1929.)

Mr. Gandhi: Young India is here to confirm that opinion.

Mr. Ghuznavi: Then we are safe.

> "Universal suffrage in a country governed by a common faith is the expression of the national will; but in a country deprived of a common belief, what can it be but the mere expression of the interest of those numerically stronger to the oppression of all the rest." (Joseph Mazzini.)
>
> "It is an essential part of democracy that minorities should be adequately represented. No real democracy, nothing but a false show of democracy, is possible without it." (John Stuart Mill.)

Mr. Sastri: Are these applicable to Bengal?

Mr. Ghuznavi: I have an interest in other parts of India.

Mr. Sastri: I want to know whether you intend these passages to apply to Bengal.

Mr. Ghuznavi: Yes, I do. Sir Abdullah says in that note:—

> "Hinduism is not only a house divided against itself by the barriers of castes, but its rigid rules and inflexible regulations raise an iron wall and forbid all social intercourse with non-Hindus. It proclaims and practices an eternal and perpetual social boycott against all non-Hindus. The fusion of Hindus with those born outside the pale of Hinduism as one nation and brotherhood is an ideal almost impossible of attainment.
>
> There are some well-intentioned Britishers who do not know India at first hand, and fondly imagine that India is England and that the principle on which English representation has been based should be the principle applicable to India. They are ignorant that 'there is a psychological, social and historical attribute, constituting, perhaps the principle differential characteristic,' of Muslims and that they are 'the product of struggles, going back for centuries' . . . . . "

He goes on to quote Sir Charles Wood:—

"We have to legislate for different races, with different languages, religions, manners and customs, ranging from the bigoted Mahommedan, who considered that we have usurped his legitimate position as the ruler of India, to the timid Hindoo, who, though bowing to every conqueror, is bigotedly attached to his caste, his religion, his laws and his customs, which have descended to him uninterruptedly for countless generations." (Sir Charles Wood, House of Commons, 6th June, 1861.)

Sir Abdullah Suhrawardy continues:—

"A passage in Lord Dufferin's Minute annexed to the Government of India's Despatch of the 6th November, 1888, describes the population of India as 'composed of a large number of distinct nationalities, professing various religions, practising diverse rites, speaking different languages, while many of them are still further separated from one another by discordant prejudices, by conflicting social usages, and even antagonistic material interests.'" (Proposals of the Government of India and Despatch of the Secretary of State.)

He goes on to quote Viscount Morley in the House of Lords, 1909:—

"The Muhammadans demand three things. I had the pleasure of receiving a deputation from them and I know very well what is in their minds. They demand the election of their representatives to these Councils in all the stages, just as in Cyprus, where I think the Muhammadans vote by themselves . . . . . Therefore we are not without a precedent and a parallel for the idea of a separate legislature. Secondly, they want a number of seats somewhat in excess of the numerical strength." (House of Lords, February 23rd, 1909.)

He also quotes Mr. Asquith in the House of Commons:—

"Undoubtedly there will be a separate legislature of the Mussulman. To us here at first sight it looks an objectionable thing because it discriminates between people and segregates them into classes on the basis of religious creed. I do not think that it is a very formidable objection. The distinction between Mussulman and Hindu is not merely religious, but it cuts deep down . . . . . and is also differentiated by the habits and social customs of the community."

My Lord, in this connection I would mention what happened afterwards. Lord Morley thought he was giving us the additional seats by allotting to us five communal seats in Bengal, and his idea was that we should go and contest on the joint electorate basis and capture as many as he could out of the other 17 seats. What happened then? Not one seat from the joint electorates could the Mussulman capture excepting by a fluke where the Hindu candidate's nomination paper was found to be irregular. Therefore out

of the seventeen we had only one, and of the whole number I think about ten went to the Hindus and six to the Europeans. But still they want us to have a joint electorate.

Turning, My Lord, next to our justifiable and incontestable claim to 51 of the seats in the Bengal Legislature, I appeal confidently for support to the latest population statistics. If we claim the full percentage rightly due to us on a population basis, we are entitled to 55. How then, My Lord, can one say that this particular claim of ours is unreasonable? Moreover, the same statistics show that the caste Hindus are 18 per cent. of the total population of Bengal; yet we agree to their having 19 per cent. of the seats in the Legislature. Where is the unfairness of this? Are we going to allow them to continue to enjoy the seats which ought to go in fairness and in justice to the Depressed Classes, as they have been hitherto enjoying them in the past? My Lord, ask the representative of the Depressed Classes here if they are prepared to surrender their natural rights to the caste Hindus. There is not the slightest doubt in my mind as to what the answer will be. In fact the answer is already given; it is contained in the document officially submitted to the Prime Minister in which the claims of the minorities communities are set forth; and in passing let me say that this document was not signed merely by the five Delegates, as Dr. Law stated; each one of those five Delegates signed in his representative capacity for the whole.

My Lord, the last subject with which I will deal is that of Bengal's finance in the past. According to the natural wealth and activity and enterprise of our people, Bengal ought to be the richest Province in India. Actually she is almost the poorest; and it is well known that her development, her public and social life, have been stunted by what we regard as an unfair apportionment of financial resources as between the Central and the Provincial Governments. My Lord, the whole story is far too long to relate here, but I would draw Your Lordship's attention to one part of it in which redress is urgent and cannot possibly in justice be denied. I refer to the export duty on jute. This profitable duty, which in fact in 1929 and 1930 yielded 463 lakhs of rupees—that is over 92 per cent. of the total export duty realised in all India—is allotted to the Central Government. Let me point out further that when world trade revives again in the near future the yield from this duty will be still higher. Now, My Lord, jute is a very rare thing; it is an absolute local monopoly; it is a monopoly of Bengal. It is the product of Bengal's activity and it should be one of the mainstays of Bengal finance. My argument on this point is immensely strengthened when you remember that the land revenue, which in other Provinces has been a continually expanding head of Provincial revenue, with us in Bengal has been frozen for almost a century and a half by the permanent settlement.

Mr. Joshi: Change it.

Mr. Ghuznavi: The permanent settlement cannot be changed.

Mr. Joshi: It can be changed.

Mr. Ghuznavi: It cannot be changed. You dare not change it. That is beyond all possibility of argument.

Mr. Joshi: Why?

Mr. Ghuznavi: Therefore, My Lord, we are entitled to claim for Bengal the revenue derived from the Bengal monopoly of jute, which is, as I say, the product of Bengal's industry and enterprise.

I can assure you, My Lord, that all communities are at one on this point and will never agree to the retention of this revenue by the Federal Government.

My Lord, before I conclude may I bring to the notice of my Hindu friends, and in particular of Dr. Moonje, the example of the Muslims of Egypt. I should like to refer to what they have done there for the Christian Arabs where the majority community consisted of the Muslim Arabs and the minority community of Copts, who are Christian Arabs. The representatives of the majority community sent for the representatives of the minority community and asked them what they wanted. One demand of theirs after another was accepted by the majority party, and, when they saw that all their demands would be accepted by the majority party, they said "What? Are you going to give us everything we want?" On receiving the assurance to that effect, they said "Henceforth we are one, and we insist on nothing that is not agreeable to you." In one hour the work of a century was done, and the Egyptians to-day, both Christians and Muslims, have become one nation. To Dr. Moonje I say, let us adopt this policy and the communal difficulties will become the history of the past.

My Lord, in conclusion, let me say a few words on a tremendously important subject, the immediate steps to be taken in the political development of India. It is quite clear, My Lord, that the full scheme of all-India Federation which we all have at heart is going to take a long time to work out. Could anyone who heard His Highness the Maharaja of Indore's speech on Saturday doubt that? And, as we know, inside British India difficulties and obstacles of the first magnitude have continually revealed themselves throughout this Conference. Let us, therefore, My Lord, start with what we know we can achieve, namely a scheme of full Provincial autonomy. Let us get the experience necessary for building up a constitution. I firmly believe that in that way we shall get better conditions than we should get by any other means and get them more speedily.

Sayed Muhammad Padshah Saheb Bahadur: I thank you most sincerely, My Lord, for giving me the opportunity to take part in the deliberations of this august assembly. I am a new member of this Conference and as such I seize this opportunity as the first and most pleasant part of my duty to associate myself with all that has been said in grateful appreciation of the genuine sympathy and willing co-operation of the members of the British Delegation here in the work of this Conference and for the help they have rendered

to this Conference in its arduous labours in finding solutions for the many difficult and delicate questions that have to be solved in the building up of the future constitution for India with a view to securing for it its due place—a place of equality in the British Commonwealth of Nations. I have come to this Conference as a representative of the Muslims of the Madras Presidency. As one who has been representing them in the Legislatures, both Provincial and Central, for more than a decade, I feel that in the few observations that I am going to make I should keep before my mind the point of view from which my community in my Province looks at these matters.

On behalf of the Muslims of Madras, I give my wholehearted support to the policy which has from time to time been enunciated by our illustrious leader, His Highness the Aga Khan. I make bold to say that although His Highness has deliberately kept himself in the background as much as possible, he has really been a very great asset not only to the members of the Muslim Delegation here, but to all his countrymen alike. Since this Conference began its deliberations last year the Muslim point of view has time after time been presented before this august assembly. In fact ever since the all-India Muslim Conference was inaugurated in January, 1929, at Delhi, the Muslim demands have been the subject of frequent discussion and negotiation. In view of this and also in view of the fact that I am speaking at a late hour in the day, I do not think it is necessary for me to reiterate the Muslim view or attempt to adduce any elaborate arguments in its support. All I wish to say on this occasion is that the Muslim demands are perfectly legitimate. They are characterised by a spirit of live and let live. Far from offending in any way the principle of democracy they prescribe the only method by which a truly democratic form of government can be brought about in India, a government which will be really representative of the people of India. Now, My Lord, in this connection I feel I must say what has already been said by our friends here, that unless our demands are all satisfied the Muslims of India and those of Madras in particular will not accept any constitution. The political horizon of the Muslims of Madras is not confined to the borders of our own Province. We regard ourselves as an integral part of the Muslim community of all-India, and we, the Muslims of Madras, insist on the Muslims of Punjab and Bengal being allowed to have a right of majority, just as much as we insist on the retention of our own weightage in the legislature of our Province.

If we survey the whole range of controversy that has been going on in this Conference and outside, in India, regarding the communal question, we find that practically there is agreement on all matters, and that the only questions on which there is any sharp difference of opinion are those of the claim of the Muslims of Punjab and Bengal for their right of majority in those Provinces, and the claims of the minorities for representation by representatives of their own choice. Now, My Lord, as regards this claim on

the part of our brothers of Punjab and Bengal, even if this is conceded, what would be the result? The result would be that the Muslims in Punjab and Bengal would have only a bare majority, while in the other six Provinces, in the other parts of India, our Hindu fellow-countrymen will be in an overwhelming majority of about 70 to 80 per cent. So long as the Muslims who comprise a small minority in those Provinces in which our Hindu brethren are in an overwhelming majority do not object to our Hindu fellow-countrymen having their legitimate majority, I do not see how our Hindu brethren have any justification whatever to deny this right to the Muslims in places where Providence has placed them in a majority position. Now, My Lord, in the Province of Madras, the Province from which I come, you are aware that the Muslims comprise only a small minority; but this does not mean that we are opposed to greater power being transferred to our Hindu fellow-countrymen. It is not because there are no local grievances. In fact there have been several occasions when the Muslim claims have been overlooked; but in spite of it all, we whole-heartedly welcome transfer of power to the Provinces in case the Muslim demands are satisfied. We are perfectly willing to have introduction of full-fledged autonomy even to-day in the Province of Madras, provided Muslim rights and liberties are effectively safeguarded. We do so feeling perfectly confident that a long habit of authority and greater experience in administration will make the majority in our Province realise that it is in their own best interests to keep the minorities contented. Therefore, My Lord, it is impossible for me to justify to myself on any ground the attitude which our Hindu brethren take up on the question of the Muslims enjoying the right of majority in those two Provinces, namely the Punjab and Bengal.

The other point of difference is the electorate. On this electorate question I think it is unnecessary for me to enter into any elaborate discussion. I should like only to make one observation and that is this. Even the most ardent champions of joint electorates admit that, in view of the special interests of the minorities, it is necessary to provide for the minorities to be represented by men belonging to their own community. When this is conceded I do not see why the right should not be conceded to the minorities of being represented by men of their own choice, so long as it is considered necessary that the minorities should be represented by men belonging to their own community. There is no reason why these representatives should not be those of their own choice and not those chosen for them by the majority. Unless this right is conceded to the minorities, it is impossible for the minorities to feel that their position is secure in the new constitution.

But, if you give them this right, you give them a sense of security, which is very desirable, for it is necessary to inspire these minorities with a sense of security if it is desired to secure their willing co-operation. The willing co-operation of all the minority communities in India is indispensable for the successful working of any constitution which may be installed in India. So long as

we have this willing co-operation, this mutual goodwill, what does it matter what the form of the electorate is? What does any concession which may be necessary for the minorities matter? All that should really matter is that there should be willingness on the part of all communities to stand shoulder to shoulder, to pull together and work for the common cause.

Now, My Lord, I will pass to some of the proposals that have been put forward before this Conference, and I will deal with them very briefly. As regards the question of all-India Federation, I would say at once that I welcome it. I would say that the Muslim community as a whole welcome this all-India Federation, but at the same time I must make it clear that my community is not at all prepared to submit itself to any undue sacrifices to bring about this Federation. On principle we are opposed to giving of any bribes—or, to put it in more parliamentary language, the offering of any inducements to the Indian Princes to persuade them to join this Federation. We want the Indian Princes to come in, but we want them to come in on terms of perfect equality as our equals and brothers. Adhering as we do to this principle of fair dealing, I am entirely opposed to the giving of any weightage to the Indian States, whether in the Indian Assembly or in the Senate.

I understand I have got to hurry through with this, so I will pass to another subject, but I should like to say there does not seem to me to be any justification whatever for giving any weightage to the Indian States at all. The Indian States are not as a block divided off from British India by any difference of religion, culture, or economic interest; there is therefore no reason whatever why they should be allowed to have any weightage and why we should not insist on their coming in strictly on a population basis.

Again, My Lord, the Muslims are opposed to the principle of nomination, and this nomination is not rendered less odious to us because it is being done by autocratic Princes in India instead of by the bureaucratic Government of India. Therefore, inspired as we are by our own traditions of democracy, our traditional democratic ideas, we insist that the Indian States should send their representatives to the Assembly only by the same open door of election as British India. Similarly, My Lord, I insist that the representatives of the Indian States in the Senate must also be chosen by some system of indirect election. This could be done with the help of the Local Advisory Council, which should be established before Federation comes into being.

As regards the proposal to establish a Federal Advisory Council, the scheme which was prepared by one of the most distinguished members of our Indian Civil Service, Mr. Alma Latifi, and circulated to us by Mahatma Gandhi, I think this is very desirable. I assert there can be no difficulty in setting up a Council of this type. Even at present the force of circumstances has compelled the Government of India to adopt the rudiments of a system of this kind. The annual conferences of ministers which are held at Delhi and Simla, at which the ministers from the Provinces meet and discuss

their problems with the Finance Member of the Government of India—what are these conferences but a Federal Council in embryo?

There would be no difficulty in fitting in such a Federal Council in the Federal Structure Committee's general scheme now before us. There is a suggestion in the Report of the Federal Structure Committee that the High Court should be centralised. It seems to me that there is a kind of feeling in the minds of some of the members of this Federal Structure Committee that the present system is not altogether satisfactory. I am a lawyer of some years' experience, and I have enough experience of the High Court in my own Province. I can say, therefore, that the High Court in my Province has not been in any way affected by the present system. The people in my Province justly regard the Madras High Court as being perfectly independent and dispensing justice untrammelled by any extraneous influence.

There is another question of importance that I would like to refer to briefly, and it is the attainment of uniformity in the matter of the power of the Federal Government in respect of the Government and Indian State Railways. After careful consideration I am strongly of the view that it would be to the advantage of our railways and the country as a whole, if the administration of State Railways is, after such regrouping as may be found necessary, handed over to the Provinces, leaving to the Federal Government sufficient powers for efficient control. Such powers will be limited to inspection, fixation of rates, laying down rates of depreciation, legislation and enforcement of international labour conventions and securing the service of railway debt, in the same manner as irrigation debt. My proposal, I have no doubt will lead to a closer co-ordination of railway policy to local requirements.

We are strongly of opinion that Central Government should be introduced as soon as possible. Our chief political organisations have advocated this policy, and the Muslim Delegation has a mandate for this policy. The Delegation has made it clear that it cannot discuss any question concerning responsibility in the Central Government until the demands of the Muslim community are conceded. This policy is in accord with Muslim sentiment and Muslim political programme. When the Muslims' demands are met, the Delegation would strongly urge that the appropriate machinery to implement the Prime Minister's policy announced on January 19th, 1931, should be set in motion immediately, and a start should be made by conferring on the Provinces of British India complete Provincial autonomy, with full power over law and order, as a part of a comprehensive scheme of Federation, with responsible government. The details of the federation scheme should be worked out without delay, and responsible government in the Centre should be established immediately after the necessary arrangements are complete. An assurance should be given to India that the scheme of federation, of which Provincial autonomy is only a part, will be implemented with the least possible delay.

(*The Conference adjourned at 7-45 p.m. and resumed at 9-30 p.m.*)

Sir Henry Gidney: My Lord, As I understand it, the purpose of a speech in this Plenary Session is not to review the whole business of the Conference and certainly not at this late hour to introduce new suggestions regarding the future form of government in India, however ingenious they may be. I take it that in this Plenary Session the task of each one of us is to sum up his reaction to the proceedings of the Conference as a whole and to relate them to the particular school of opinion or interests which he represents. In my speech of November 18th last year at a plenary meeting of this Conference I gave reasons for my belief that a federal government for India would be a plant of slow growth, and I pressed some of the conditions adverse to its growth. I asked then that we should fix our minds on an immediate advance of a more practical kind than this noble, but alas somewhat idealistic vision of an all-India Federation. I said then that my conception of a practical measure would be to give India immediately complete Provincial autonomy, and, when the Provinces had stabilised themselves, allow them absolute freedom to federate with those States which were willing to enter into association, and so form a number of federated units which could eventually combine in an all-India Federation with a strong responsible and representative Government. Well, My Lord, wise men are not slaves to their past speeches, and while adhering generally to all I said last November I think the element of responsibility in the Central Government to which I referred should be brought more in the foreground of the picture than I had placed it. In a word I agree with so many of my fellow delegates, including Sir Hubert Carr and Sir A. P. Patro, that Provincial autonomy alone is not enough. It is not enough, not only because it will not satisfy the aspirations of large sections of Indian opinion, but because it is unworkable, literally unworkable without some adequate and appropriate measure of responsibility in the Centre, with safeguards. Clearly, Sir, any immediate measure of responsibility at the Centre for British India is a grave danger to Federation. It may be that political institutions and equally important political conventions will arise in British India, that political parties may develop. These will make it more and more difficult when the Princes ultimately would come in. These dangers must be guarded against at all costs, for there is no permanent hope for India except in the all-India Federation which we around this table have conceived and worked hard to attain. That must certainly be the overriding condition of any advance at the Centre of the British Government.

Sir, there is another vitally important consideration to which I shall confine myself almost entirely. That is the question of the minorities. I am sure that you, My Lord, and the Prime Minister must be heartily sick of these words, for they have been dinned into your ears day and night, and all the discussions of this Conference seem to end in a blind alley with the words " communal safeguard "

painted on the wall. But, My Lord, what is weariness of the flesh for you is life and death to us of the minorities, and particularly to my community, the smallest and most vulnerable of all.

The Prime Minister, and, I believe you, Sir, have always declared yourself an optimist. My esteemed friend Mahatma Gandhi has also made a similar claim. My Lord, I am also an optimist, but I might say that when I entered the Minorities Committee I did so optimistically; I am sorry, however, to remark that I leave it mystioptically. I will not travel old ground. My position is stated in the document containing the minorities' demands which was submitted to you the last time the Minorities Committee met; and I should like to say that those of us who signed that document did so not for the purpose of bringing about further schism in Indian opinion; we did so in order to get as great a common measure of agreement as possible, so as to limit and define the points of view of the varying communities and interests as closely and as clearly as possible. Any others who like to adhere to that document can do so; but I do claim that it represents a service to India and a practical step towards the solution of the community problem. Dr. Moonje in referring to the League of Nations when it said that it was not right to spoon-feed any minority communities—

Dr. Moonje: I did not say it.

Sir Henry Gidney :—put forward that claim and applied it to the minority problem of India.

Dr. Moonje: It is the London "Times" which says so.

Sir Henry Gidney: Speaking for the community I have the honour to represent, let me tell him and the Conference that if he includes me in that category, assuming the community has been spoon-fed, in our case we have always filled the spoon that has fed us. Let it be clearly understood, Sir, that this agreement is not meant to be and will not be an additional cause of strife, but, properly interpreted and handled, can and should be of immeasurable assistance to you and your Government in finding a way and a decision through the tangled skein of the intermingled claims and counter-claims of India. That is all I propose to say on the subject of the minorities problem.

As regards my own community, my views and my claims are already in your possession, and I confidently look to you and the British Government for justice. Sir, for a moment look at the community that I represent; hitherto an Indian and not an Indian, a Briton and not a Briton; claimed by each when we are useful to them, rejected when the time comes for the division of political and economic guerdons. To you, therefore, and to the British Parliament I say that you you have no better and more loyal citizens in India than the Anglo-Indian community. To my Indian colleagues I say that the self-governing India of the future will have no more trusty citizens than those contributed by my community. We have done our best to be loyal to both countries, India and Britain, and we shall continue in that endeavour. To the British I say that our

past services entitle us to the fullest consideration; indeed, to use the words of the Services sub-Committee, to " special and generous consideration." To my Indian brethren I would say that any hurt to my community, with its singular record of service to the State, and the unique part which it has played in the development of Indian communications, will be a hurt done to the whole body politic of India; and any hurt done to India will be a hurt to my community.

Year by year we are being more and more speedily expropriated from Services in India which we have built up ourselves, and which are to-day, and I hope will continue to be in the future, the principal sources of wealth in the country. My friend Mr. Ghuznavi referred to the economic position of the Muslims in Bengal. That description pales into insignificance when I refer to the position of the Anglo-Indians in Government services in Bengal to-day as compared with what it was but a few years ago; indeed, I make bold to say that in some services they do not exist; they have been entirely replaced by Bengalis under the guise of Indianisation.

Sir, I say without hesitation or fear of contradiction, that without the Anglo-Indian community India must have waited for decades for the development to which I refer, and also, if it had been carried out by Englishmen it would have been at a cost vastly higher.

Again, Sir, I say I do not want to retraverse old ground; I shall be content with stating our unique position and our special claims, and leave it with every confidence in your hands.

Before I conclude, My Lord, I should like to draw the attention of this Conference to a very important matter connected with the working of one of the great Imperial Services in India, namely the Indian Medical Service. You must be aware that, as a result of the Government's omission to deal with the conditions of this Service in a comprehensive and thorough manner, a condition exists to-day both in and out of the Indian Medical Service, of intense misunderstanding and restless uncertainty, with the result that this onetime magnificent Service is suffering both in prestige and utility. This, in my opinion, is in a very large measure responsible for the paucity and inferiority of the candidates who are now being recruited by nomination in England, and for the acute discontent, amounting almost to antagonism, in the Indian medical profession towards the present position.

As a retired officer of the Indian Medical Service, I feel I should be failing in my duty both to the Service to which I once had the honour to belong as also to my country, India, if I failed to impress on you the great harm that is being done, and will continue to be done, to medical science and public health in India if the British Government were suddenly to discontinue the recruitment of British I.M.S. Officers into the civil medical services of the Provinces. In my opinion such recruitment must continue, though in decreasing numbers, for some years to come, until Indian medical colleges and

hospitals are raised to a standard of efficiency equivalent to that of European institutes, a state of affairs which certainly does not obtain to-day. Also I feel that India's aspirations to control and man her own medical services, and her desire completely to eradicate all racial distinctions and differences between British and Indian medical officers must be satisfied without delay. The colour prejudice, still rampant in India, to my mind, is the curse of India and must be stopped at all costs.

Reviewing the discussion on this subject in the Services sub-Committee, one cannot but be struck with the unreality and impracticability of many of the views expressed. Indeed, My Lord, I should say that as far as the medical profession, both official and non-official, in India is concerned, the discussion and findings were entirely one-sided and *ex parte*, and for these reasons I suggest to His Majesty's Government the advisability of the early appointment of an Expert Committee to go into the matter thoroughly and finally. As you know, My Lord, many such committees have sat on this subject, but not one report has been accepted. It is high time that a report acceptable to all was started, for both the Britisher and Indian want to know where they stand to-day.

Before I sit down, I desire to refer to just one other point. If our proceedings are to be continued in India by way of special committees or otherwise, I hope very earnestly that the Government will see that my community and its point of view are adequately represented. I am delighted to know that that remark of mine receives such approval from my colleagues, and on no account, I would ask Government, let any of these committees examine the question of joint versus separate electorates. Regard that, Sir, as a fixed and settled matter. Do not, I beg of you be persuaded to re-open it, or if you do, Sir, you will give rise to the gravest and the most lively fears on the part of the communities concerned.

Moreover, any such effort would be tantamount to discrediting the representative character of the signatories to the joint memorandum we submitted and the authority with which they spoke. We could not tolerate such an aspersion, no matter who persuades you to do otherwise. Believe me, Sir, if any such effort is made—and I believe I speak on behalf of every signatory to that memorandum as also the members of the parties whom they represent—I repeat, Sir, if any such effort is made it would raise a storm of passion which would wipe out all the good work we have done at the Round Table Conference. Settle that problem if you want, yourselves—we have asked you to do so—but do not re-open it. You have tried it in this country under, as my friend Mrs. Subbarayan has said, the fog of November, but you have here elements which make more for peace and harmony. Do not attempt to re-open it in the atmosphere of India, surcharged as it is with communal antagonism. Sir, the curtain will soon descend on the final scene we are enacting to-day as representatives of India. As one of them who truly and authoritatively represents one of the smallest, yet very important, communities of India, I pray that Almighty Providence will so guide you in your decision that India and her various

communities in working out her destiny will, in a spirit of trust and confidence, and as children of one united family, steadily march on the road to Dominion Status. When that goal is reached I fervently hope—and I appeal to the Mahatma Gandhi who has refused to recognise my community, for reasons I do not know, with logic I cannot understand—I hope, Sir, that my community as a member of that family, as it undoubtedly is, will not be found wanting or be deprived of the opportunity, as we apprehend, in helping to shape the future India as we have so materially done for the past India now fast disappearing from our vision. Sir, I have done. I have implicit trust both in Englishmen and Indians to help us in our desire, in our ambition—help which my community has by its past and present services worthily merited from both countries. We have always played the game with England and India. All we ask of you both is to play the game with us, for believe me, My Lord, no community in India stands in greater need of protection against the danger of having its economic stability utterly ruined. We are your most loyal and patriotic fellow-subjects.

I am confident I do not appeal in vain. In the name of Anglo-India I place the future of my community, whose cause I have striven to advocate to the best of my ability, before you, the British Cabinet and the British Parliament, with every confidence.

**H.H. The Maharaj Rana of Dholpur:* Sir, with the presentation of the Third Report of the Federal Structure Committee we have reached a stage in our deliberations, when before we come to look to the details of each individual question involved, we might just look back on the whole question of the evolution of a greater India in its entirety.

We have reached a fair amount of agreement on many points, and we are still trying to find out some sort of solutions about others, and the results of all these labours have been encouraging. And for all that has been achieved, allow me to thank the Lord Chancellor for the far-sighted statesmanship, tact, patience and sympathy with which he has guided the deliberations of the Federal Structure Committee.

I have looked at the Report primarily and naturally from the view points of the States, along with it, I have not lost sight of the larger and equally pressing and important urge of greater India. And it is from these points of view that I am going to make certain observations.

For these last many weeks, the work of the Round Table Conference and of its Committees has largely turned upon points of detail. For this reason, in the remarks that I shall make upon the Report of the Federal Structure Committee, I shall venture to spend the time at my disposal in reiterating once again certain broad questions of principle which, I suggest, we shall do well to

* NOTE.—The speeches, from that of H.H. The Maharaj Rana of Dholpur to that of Sir Shah Nawaz Bhutto, on pages 221 to 238, which are marked with an asterisk, were, by leave of the Conference, and in order to economise time, handed in as written speeches instead of being delivered.

keep prominently in view, if we are to attain satisfactorily the goal towards which we are all striving.

As the Report itself clearly recognises, it is " essential that the India of the future should include with British India, that ' Indian India,' which, if Burma is excluded, embraces nearly half of the area and nearly a quarter of the population of the country."

These two portions of India were spoken of in the first Report of the Committee as two " component elements " of the future federation; and I suggest that we shall do well to remember that the distinction between the Indian States and British India is no mere question of convenient nomenclature; it is in actual fact the distinction between two different groups of political units, which distinctly possess, as the present Report has it, " widely varying *polities* and divergent degrees of internal sovereignty."

And it is to be remembered that unless what the Report distinctly calls " the natural desire of the Indian States to conserve their integrity " is arbitrarily to be overborne, the distinction between the two parts of India in their peculiar form, is bound to persist into the future.

Just as in certain matters the Provinces of British India enjoy pronounced political affinity among themselves, constitutionally recognised by the existence of Central subjects and Central legislation, so the States will in certain other matters enjoy a community of interests peculiar to themselves.

It seems to me all the more necessary to point out this essential factor, in that the framework contemplated in the Report of the Federal Structure Committee seems in certain particulars to gloss over, in a manner which I suggest is incompatible with the actual facts of the situation, the distinction between the two component parts of India.

I would desire in this connection to draw particular attention to paragraph 11 of the Report, in which reference is made to proposals, which the Committee has not been able fully to discuss, but which they recommend for further consideration.

Among these proposals is one which I venture to think will demand the most careful consideration from all quarters. It is that which proposes a unicameral legislature.

It has the support of no less a figure on the other side of the table, than Mahatma Gandhi, and several other distinguished members of the British-Indian Delegation; it has on this side the support of our farsighted and veteran statesman, Sir Akbar Hydari; it has the support of what I venture to term a great and growing body of opinion among those States which favour the entry of Indian India into the future structure of all-India through the gateway of confederation.

For my own part, I canont but think that the project of the unicameral legislature will serve to obviate many of the admitted difficulties which at the present moment threaten to postpone the creation of the all-India scheme, which we all desire; and I earnest-

ly trust that the plan will be examined with the care and attention which its potentialities fully deserve.

While the project of a unicameral federal legislature is one which is of equal concern to British India and the Indian States, the project which I desire now to explain and to which I would invite the attention of my colleagues, is mainly one which concerns the Indian States.

This project may be called for convenience the confederation plan.

At the outset, I desire to remove certain misconceptions which, to judge from questions put to me on a previous occasion by my learned friend, Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, are present to the minds of my British-Indian colleagues. I cannot claim to rival my learned friend, and the many distinguished ornaments of the Indian Bar who sit opposite to me, in the arts of debate; and the explanation which I shall give of the confederation plan will be the statements of a plain practical man, who does not pretend to be versed in constitutional subtleties, but is not without some experience of the practical needs of administration in India.

My friend, Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, argues that the principles of confederation will be a source of conflict between the States and British India. But I would ask Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru why he thinks that a confederation of the States will aggravate the position, which must in any case arise even in the legislatures which he contemplates? If questions arise in the future Federal Legislature which affect the States as a whole, does Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru imagine that the States will be prevented from voting together? In fact, we of the Indian States do not contemplate the possibility of a solid States' block voting against a solid British-Indian block.

If we thought otherwise, believe me, Prime Minister, the very idea of federation would have entirely disappeared as suddenly as it appeared, but that I can clearly point out has not been the case.

We have voluntarily blessed the idea of joining hands with British India and we unhesitatingly proceeded with a conviction of the best of will, trust and mutual accommodation and the endeared human spirit of " live and let live." But further than that, we earnestly hope that our British-Indian friends in the legislature will be as jealous of safeguarding the legitimate rights of the States as we ourselves, and the representatives of the States will enthusiastically respond.

We really contemplate, in fact, with the greatest confidence that throughout practically the entire range of federal matters the voting will be on regional lines; the States of one region combining with the Provinces on that region, in order to protect regional interests.

May I therefore suggest to Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru that there are no grounds for the apprehension that a Confederation of the States would cause the States' representatives to vote in a solid block, on matters, which under the plan, which he accepts, they would otherwise treat upon regional lines.

Still less substance there seems to me to be, if I may say so, with due respect, in Sir Tej Bahadur's second objection, that the Confederation will form a super-State, and thus reduce the sovereignty of the present States.

While I am delighted to find that Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru is so generous a champion of our cherished sovereignty for ourselves, I would point out to him that if the States enter upon confederation, they will not thereby be creating a super-State.

The Confederation will not be a State at all, it will have neither executive nor administrative authority attached to it; it will have no sovereignty; it will, in fact, only be a piece of convenient machinery created for the expressly limited and specified purpose of arranging the States' representation in the best form on an all-India Federation.

Finally, I should like to assure Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and my British-Indian friends that the project of a States' confederation now counts among its supporters a number of Princes, who are the supporters of an all-India Federation.

I should like, therefore, to repeat at this point the conviction which I have more than once expressed, that the confederation plan is not one to excite alarm or apprehension in the minds of our British-Indian fellow-countrymen. It is primarily a project for facilitating a large number of Indian States entering into an all-India Federation.

May I take this opportunity of enumerating briefly the advantages which it offers, and at the same time of clearing away certain of the misconceptions which surround it?

Let me begin by enumerating some of the admitted difficulties which attend the entry of all the Indian States into a future federation on a strictly individual basis.

In the first place, what criterion is to be adopted for individual representation? Population by itself cannot be a guide; as is obvious from the universally admitted necessity providing weightage for the States as a whole in the future federal legislature.

On the other hand, if sovereignty is to be taken as a criterion, States which are fully sovereign cannot be expected to accept a position of inferiority to other units, whose sovereignty is and has been no greater.

To meet this difficulty, it has been suggested that if the States find it difficult to agree among themselves as to their individual representation by a certain date, an impartial tribunal should be set up by His Majesty's Government, whose delicate mission will by no means be easy as it will have to adjust with great tact and justice and be guided by the two important criteria of size and sovereignty.

But would it not be better to avoid the heart-burning, and the causes of future disunity, to which this procedure might give rise,

by arranging for a collective representation, which the States could work out for themselves, as circumstances require?

Indeed, the more closely we scrutinise the suggestions put forward regarding States' representation in the Report of the Federal Structure Committee, the more deeply I am impressed by the difficulties which threaten progress.

The Report contemplates an Upper House of 200 and a Lower House of 300, in which the States' representatives will number 80 and 100 respectively. I must take this opportunity of entering my own emphatic caveat, which I am convinced has the support of the vast majority of the Princes in the Chamber, and of practically all of those outside, against the proportionate strength allocated respectively to the Indian States and to British India.

The claim which we put forward for a fifty-fifty representation in the Upper House, I wish to make clear, was conceived in no bargaining spirit; it rested upon a solid question of principle. This principle was, that the two federating parts of India should be equally represented in that Chamber which voiced the views of the various federating governments as a whole. We maintained, as we still maintain, that it is no policy to keep one of the two great elements of federation in a perpetual statutory minority in the Federal Chamber, especially the one, which as a sacrifice is purposely deviating from its sovereign position to help the realisation of an all-India Federation. This argument itself calls aloud for just decision, as I feel sure it will go a long way for the future peace and goodwill.

But whether the proportion ultimately remains as suggested in the Federal Structure Committee's Report, or whether we take the more equitable course which I am now advocating, my initial contention remains the same, namely, that in any Federal Legislature of practicable size, the actual number of seats available to the Indian States' representatives will necessitate so considerable an amount of grouping, that the individual representation will be automatically ruled out so far as a very large number of States are concerned. And I must put on record my considered apprehension that if the principle of individual representation is adopted, and if its application to the States as a whole is thus circumscribed by the rigid requirements of practical necessity, many States which have hitherto announced their approval of the scheme of federation as a general conception will be compelled to withdraw their support.

On the other hand, if the vision of individual representation for all Chamber States disappears, the great majority of the States will find themselves equal partners in a States' confederation which will jointly return all the States' representatives. Such a project, which will reconcile the dignity and the individual existence of the States, with the practical requirements of the new Constitution is, as I have already said, receiving growing support from among those States whose natural anxieties have been aroused by the realisation that individual representation is impossible for them.

I would further point out in passing that the plan of confederation provides an easy, and indeed a semi-automatic solution for the difficulty discussed in paragraphs 15 and 16 of the Report, which will certainly arise if the entire body of Indian States do not desire to enter federation in the first instance.

I am convinced that the more closely this plan is examined, the more clearly will it appear that it will solve a variety of intricate questions, which are certain to arise between the States *inter se*, connected with the allotment of representation to particular interests, and the redistribution which will be necessary consequent upon the entry of further States into the federation. Moreover, it will once for all exorcise that spectre which has from time to time alarmed the truest and most enthusiastic supporters of the federal idea, namely, the virtual impossibility under any scheme of individual representation, of fitting a very large number of States, big and small, to the framework of a greater India.

Further, if I may be so bold as to say so, I believe that there are features in the confederation plan, which would appeal very strongly to our British-Indian friends. Not only will this plan facilitate the rapid entry of States into the federation, and thus enable the scheme of all-India to be initiated with the least possible delay, but in addition, it contains within itself the germ of a great educative machinery, which will encourage the various States, by moral persuasion and by the force of practical example, to pursue the ideals inherent in Federation; to modify in a true sense where essentially needed their administrations, which will in no way be foreign to the genius of the people of the land. In short we shall fully justify our peculiar existence and be worthy and helpful partners in the great scheme for the land of our birth, where we are no strangers and where our inherent and genuine love for that great country is second to none.

Besides, such a machinery as this will immensely facilitate the task of the federal executive in securing the enthusiastic co-operation of the States in all federal activities.

Finally, it has to be remembered that under the plan of confederation, the representatives of the Indian States who will sit side by side with the representatives of British India, will not be mere nominees, but will themselves have passed through a process of very real, though perhaps restricted, election.

The mere fact that the plan of confederation has been hailed by so many representatives of the medium sized and smaller States as a solution of the practical difficulties attending their entry into an all-India Federation, has perhaps of itself been responsible for creating certain apprehensions in the minds of the greater States. I am convinced that these apprehensions will disappear, as the details of the scheme become better known.

It would obviously be unfair to expect the bigger States to content themselves with a single vote in the Electoral College, side by side with single votes of the smaller States. A position so illogical

has never been contemplated. It is proposed that the greatest States shall be entitled to a number of permanent seats, in proportion to their actual importance. These permanent seats must, of course, be filled by the Electoral College from the quota of representatives nominated by each big State, so that if a State having four permanent seats were to nominate only four candidates, all four would automatically be adopted by the Electoral College.

The nomination of a greater number of candidates would not only enable the College to elect from that panel the best individuals; but would also, place at the disposal of the College, for the purpose of the representation of regional and special interests, an adequate supply of trained intelligence in which the greater States are fortunately so rich.

Indeed, one fascinating feature of the confederation plan is its accommodating flexibility; and the manner in which it can be adapted to meet the requirements of the bigger, as well as the smaller States, which if I may say, will be for the undisputed benefit to both; as well as to provide for the representation of regional and special interests.

In my judgment, it is this plan and this plan alone, which provides the solution of many apprehended difficulties, and I confidently commend it to the favourable notice of all those who are true supporters of an all-India Federation.

I thank you, Sir, for giving me the opportunity to make these observations.

**Nawab Liaqat Hayat Khan:* Sir, when the general idea of federation was first adumbrated at the last Plenary Session of the Round Table Conference, several of the Indian Princes forming part of the Delegation on behalf of the Indian States at the Conference welcomed the proposal as the best solution of India's abstruse political problems. They did so in an extremely patriotic spirit, inspired and animated with the desire to assist India's achievement of her destined position in the British Commonwealth of Nations—a Commonwealth that will go down in history as the most perfect achievement of human organisation. Their general acceptance of the idea of federation gave a direct lie to the charge that has so often been made that the Indian Princes are opposed to British India's legitimate political aspirations. It cannot be disputed for a moment that the representatives of the Indian States at the last Session of the Round Table Conference generally blessed the conception of an all-India Federation, because they were of the opinion that a federal constitution would be in the best interests of India as a whole. It is also true that they welcomed the idea of federation as an ultimate goal, fully conscious of the fact that the federal constitution would involve a certain amount of sacrifice on their part. It is, however, equally true that none of the Princes present at the Round Table Conference contemplated a scheme of federation which did not adequately safeguard their sovereignty

and internal independence to a degree necessary to perpetuate the autonomous character of their States.

When, therefore, on their return to India, the proposed scheme of federation was carefully examined by the States, several of the Princes who had played a leading rôle in the deliberations of this august Conference last year, including His Highness of Patiala, came to the definite and inevitable conclusion that the scheme outlined here had to be carefully re-examined and substantially supplemented before the majority of the States could reasonably be expected to accept the proposals. Such an attitude on the part of some of the important States has unfortunately been misunderstood in certain quarters; indeed, the Memorandum on Federation issued by The Maharaja of Patiala emphasizing this point of view evoked a great deal of criticism and controversy. But I contend, and I contend very strongly, with due deference to the eminent constitution-makers at this Conference, that this attitude on the part of the States is not only reasonable but fully justified by the circumstances of the case. The Indian Princes would be betraying the sacred trust and duty which Divine Providence has imposed on them in the interests of their States and their subjects if they accepted any scheme of constitution which would gradually lead to the disappearance of their individual and separate existence.

It would be perfectly fair on the part of the British-Indian representatives to ask the Indian States to make sacrifices in the common interests of a greater India; it would be perfectly legitimate on their part to expect that the Princes should willingly and gladly cede a certain amount of their power and authority to the newly constituted Federal Government, in order to create one, united, and undivided India, for the benefit of the three hundred and fifty millions of India's sons and daughters; but, certainly, it cannot be legitimately argued that the Princes should, in course of time, sacrifice all that they possess, all that they cherish, all their sacred heritage and legacy, in order that British India may realise its political ambition. If the States are expected to make sacrifices in the interests of India as a whole, British India must equally be prepared to make sacrifices, and the future constitution of India must be framed and constructed in a spirit of generous compromise. I would, therefore, appeal to my brothers in British India—and to my British-Indian colleagues here—to be as generous to the States as the States are to them, and so make the States' cause their own. As the accredited representative of His Highness The Maharaja of Patiala who, as the Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes, blessed the conception of federation at the last Plenary Session of this epoch-making Conference, but who, in the interests of the States, also criticised the scheme outlined in the report of the Federal Structure Committee, I can assure my British-Indian colleagues that the Indian States are fully alive to the legitimate political aspirations of British India and are fully prepared to make such sacrifices as may be necessary in order to help British India realise her legitimate aspirations, but I must also assure my colleagues that

no constitutional scheme would be acceptable to the vast majority of the States which did not recognise and appreciate two fundamental principles which the States are not prepared to abandon. In the first place, any constitutional scheme which it is intended that the States should accept must necessarily recognise the incontrovertible fact that, whereas the Indian States enjoy and exercise sovereign power and authority, the other federating units of the proposed federation are neither sovereign nor autonomous: hence, the constitution must necessarily provide adequate and substantial safeguards for the maintenance and preservation of the internal sovereignty of the States. No scheme of constitution which does not pay due regard to this important factor will, I can assure my colleagues, be acceptable to the majority of Indian States. Secondly, if the British-Indian representatives at this Conference desire that the bulk of the Indian States should enter the proposed all-India Federation, the federal constitution must provide for the maintenance and preservation of the traditional and time-honoured relations between the States and the British Crown. The Indian States would not, I am sure, be prepared to accept any scheme of constitution in which they would be placed in such a position as would deprive them of the necessary right and power to maintain their relations of amity and friendship with the British Crown. I submit, with all due deference, that the scheme which has been elaborated at the Federal Structure Committee this year, and which has been placed before the Conference for our consideration, does not adequately recognise these two principles, and therefore must be substantially altered in order to make it acceptable to the States in general.

Sir, with your permission, I will now proceed to cite one or two instances, to substantiate the contention I have advanced that, in the proposed constitution, the position of the States will not be sufficiently safeguarded to enable them to discharge satisfactorily their obligations to the Crown, as well as their trust towards their subjects.

Let us take, for instance, the question of the representation of the States in the Federal Houses. The Federal Structure Committee have recommended that the Upper Chamber should consist of 200 members, in which the allotment of seats of the States should be in the proportion of 40 per cent., or approximately 80 seats. As regards the Lower Chamber, they have suggested that it should comprise 300 representatives, and the allotment of seats to the States should be in the proportion of $33\frac{1}{3}$ per cent., or approximately 100 seats. So far as the Lower Chamber is concerned, the proportions suggested are unobjectionable; since on the analogy of other Federations, the criterion for the allotment of seats should be primarily, and subject only to minor modifications, the population ratio. But in the Upper House this criterion cannot be admitted. Here we are dealing with the Governments of the federating units; we are concerned with the federating Provinces of British India on the one hand, and on the other, with the federating Indian States.

Any inequality in representation, any departure from the 50—50 ratio of allotment of seats between the two parties of the Federation, will necessarily condemn the Indian States to a position of perpetual inferiority. But it is obvious that if these proportions are finally accepted by His Majesty's Government and by the British Parliament, the Indian States will undoubtedly be placed in a position of perpetual minority. It has been argued that, on the basis of population, the Indian States are not entitled to claim a larger number of seats than the number that has been recommended by the Federal Structure Committee. I would, however, humbly point out that the ratio of population is not the main factor and should not be the guiding principle in the constitution, which we are engaged in devising for the benefit of India as a whole. Further, the basis of population has been disregarded even in the allotment of seats to the various Provinces which comprise British India to-day. To cite one instance only, the Committee have recommended that the Presidencies of Bombay and Bengal should have an equal number of representatives in the Federal House, although Bengal has double the population of the Presidency of Bombay. Similarly, other instances could safely be cited from the Report of the Federal Structure Committee. All these so-called exceptions to the general rule of the basis of population have been supported on the ground that in all these cases considerations of commercial and political importance must undoubtedly prevail. In all fairness to the States, I submit, similar considerations should prevail when the question of their representation in the Federal Houses is being examined. The States are undoubtedly entitled to larger representation on the ground of their political importance and internal sovereignty. They are also entitled to claim larger representation, in view of the fact that they do not in any manner improve their legal status and position by accepting the Federal scheme, whereas British India will certainly be able to realise one of its political aspirations. There is another important point which must not be ignored. When at the last plenary session of this Conference, the Indian States accepted the principle of federation, they did so because they were informed that His Majesty's Government would not be prepared to concede responsibility at the Centre to British India until and unless the Indian States agreed to enter the Federation and thereby exercise a stabilising influence on the British-Indian elements. With due deference I would urge that, if that has been the object of inviting the Indian States to join the proposed all-India Federation, surely the object will be totally frustrated if the scheme now evolved is acepted by His Majesty's Government, because the Indian States will, under the proposed scheme, be placed in such a position of hopeless minority that the question of exercising any kind of stabilising influence will never arise.

For these reasons I am authorised to lend my fullest support on behalf of The Maharaja of Patiala to the scheme which was devised at the Bombay Conference of Princes held in August last, and which has now been laid before this Conference so succinctly and

clearly by The Maharaja of Indore and has been so ably supported by His Highness of Dholpur.

It will be noticed that the scheme which is now being put forward as an alternative proposal differs from the scheme elaborated at the Federal Structure Committee this year on two fundamental and essential points. In the first place the corner stone of the alternative constitution is the combination or confederation of Indian States. This Confederation, it is firmly believed, will obviate several difficulties which might otherwise arise. For instance, it is difficult to conceive of a federal constitution with such a vast number of States as exist in India to-day. Indeed, the history of federal constitutions does not furnish a single precedent in which such a large number of component states have been successfully grouped together. On the contrary, there is ample evidence to indicate that a federal constitution, even when embracing a small group of homogeneous states, cannot prove to be stable or successful in the absence of strong centripetal forces. I therefore submit that if the principle of confederation is not accepted, the proposed constitution will prove to be unwieldy and unworkable. Further, the constitution as framed by the Federal Structure Committee cannot provide adequate and satisfactory representation of all the federating units, if the States and the British Indian Provinces individually are treated as federating units of the proposed constitution. This difficulty is, however, easily solved if all the States which are so closely linked together by racial, cultural and political ties, are grouped together in one solid compact body for the purpose of federation with British India. In other words, if we have two federating units, namely, the Federation of the British Indian Provinces and the Confederation of the States, instead of more than 400 federating units as under the proposed constitution, it will undoubtedly facilitate the smooth and successful working of the new constitution for India.

There is another important factor which must not be lost sight of. If the Confederation of States is carried into effect, and this Confederation constitutes a part of the proposed Federation, it will undoubtedly strengthen the position of the States in the future polity of India. The Confederation of States as proposed in the alternative scheme will be in a position to exercise a stabilising and sobering influence on the extreme elements in the Federal Constitution instead of being in a hopeless position of perpetual minority, as would undoubtedly be the case if the scheme as elaborated in the Federal Structure Committee were finally accepted and brought into force. The claim of the States for equal representation in the Upper House is also strengthened if the Confederation of the States is carried into effect, and there are consequently only two States constituting the Federation instead of a large number of component units. It is our firm belief that with these two different interests, these two federating units differing in regard to political culture and tradition, seeking their fullest development in association or combination in the greatest interest of India as a whole, these two

different cultures with two different political ideals acting and reacting on each other, will undoubtedly be able to produce a polity peculiar to India and best suited to the needs and requirements of the soil. The second point of fundamental difference between the scheme evolved at the Federal Structure Committee and the alternative proposals which we have put forward relates to the question of the method of representation of the States in the Federal Houses. The alternative proposals provide a half-way house, a compromise between the principles of unrestricted election and of undiluted nomination. Our scheme postulates the election of the representatives of the States by the Chamber of Princes which it is proposed would constitute an Electoral College for the Confederation instead of the representatives being nominated by each individual state. It is therefore clear that the representatives of the States under the alternative scheme will represent the collective interest of the Confederation as a whole, and will thus be in a position to promote the interests of the States when there is a clash between the ideals of the States and the democratic ideals of British India.

Sir, it cannot for a moment be disputed that the Indian States have so far been the noted and remarkable repositories of all that is best in Indian art and culture. If India is to retain her individuality in the domain of art, literature, and politics, the Indian States must necessarily play an increasingly important rôle in the future polity of India, and if the Indian States are to acquire a greater importance in the future constitution, then I would submit that the alternative scheme provides a better and more expedient solution of the most difficult problem which faces us to-day. I would therefore appeal to you for earnest and serious consideration of the proposals with which are associated the names of Their Highnesses of Indore, Patiala and Dholpur, and which are supported by a large section of the Princes' camp—I would appeal to you for your serious examination of these proposals in the interest of India, in the interest of Great Britain, and in the greater interest of the British Commonwealth of Nations.

**Sir Muhammad Mehr Shah:* Sir, I represent in this Conference the great landowners as well as the *pirs*, or spiritual leaders of the Muslims in the Punjab. The class to which I belong is one that naturally keeps itself above communal strife, and my family in particular have been well-known as men of moderate views. I came to this country in the hopes of helping to solve the communal tangle. I deeply regret that we have not been successful. We have all tried our best, but I am sorry to say that the majority community, who should have dealt with us as an elder brother deals with a younger, have failed to play their part.

I know that some people like to fasten the blame for our communal troubles on the British Government. I am in a position to say that this charge is unfounded. For does not the Government know very well that these communal troubles ultimately do no good to anybody, certainly not to the third party? In the first place,

they put a stop to all constructive work and to every class of productive activity. By interfering with the well-being of the people, they bring trade to a standstill. And what Government can approve of such a state of affairs?

Again, communal squabbles between two parties, one of which is stronger than the other, end by making both the contending parties enemies of the third party. In the struggle Government have to help now one party and now the other, with the result that in the end the smaller party comes to feel that it has nothing to again from Government and joins the stronger party. This is what happened in Bengal after the revocation of the Partition, as you heard last Saturday from the lips of my friend, Mr. Fazl-ul-Huq. I feel that the time has come for His Majesty's Government to settle the communal question finally, after making such immediate enquiries on the spot as they may consider necessary. I trust that the announcement which the Prime Minister is going to make to-morrow will include the immediate creation of some machinery that will help him to do this.

In common with my Muslim brethren, I stand for constitutional advance in India, both at the Centre, and in the Provinces, on sound logical lines, and I support generally the views put forward by our revered leader, His Highness the Aga Khan; I believe, however, in steady progress, which, of course, need not be slow progress. As an important step in that direction, I support the idea of an Advisory Federal Council, recently circulated by Mr. Gandhi. From the experience I have had of the working of Government at the Centre, I think it will be all to the good if the various Governments of the future Federation are made to come together regularly, with the object of making their views felt by the Central Government.

While welcoming the principle of federation, however, I am against any undue advantages, political or financial, being given to the Indian States, in order to induce them to come into it. I am very glad to find that the able Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes, His Highness the Nawab of Bhopal, whom all Indians, including his Muslim colleagues hold in the highest esteem, has, in his Memorandum of 13th January, 1931, asked for representation only according to population in the Lower House of the Central Legislature. This is after all but just. In my view the States are not entitled to representation in either House of the Federal Legislature except on the basis of population.

I am surprised, Sir, that in the course of this Plenary Session so little has been said regarding the need for an immediate loosening of the control of the Secretary of State over the Government of India. This control has been irksome enough in the past and is now an anachronism. There is certainly no excuse for it now with so able and experienced a Viceroy as Lord Willingdon at the helm of affairs in India. I trust that this illustrious statesman will be left alone for the next few years to guide the destinies of India.

In conclusion, Sir, I wish to place on record that we Moslems of India will not accept any constitution which does not satisfy the reasonable demands of our community. Amongst the matters to which I attach special importance are the maintenance of the majorities in the Punjab and in Bengal, the setting-up of the North-West Frontier Province as a Unit of the Federation of absolutely the same status as the other Governor's Provinces, and finally, the setting-up of Sind as a separate Province.

**Mr. Shiva Rao:* Sir, I wish to make a brief statement in my personal capacity. Mr. Giri spoke on Saturday for the entire Indian Labour Delegation, and I have not much to add, so far as Labour is concerned, to what he said. I believe, Sir, in one of the Prime Minister's first speeches after the last general election he said that as Prime Minister, he will never overlook the claims of the millions of the workers in this country. I hope that in the work that lies ahead in regard to constitution-building for India, he will give a similar assurance to the workers of my country.

There is one point on which I should like to say a word. A Boundaries Commission will, I expect, be appointed as soon as possible. I submitted a memorandum this year on the need for creating a separate Karnataka province by the amalgamation of all the Kanarese-speaking areas in the Bombay and Madras Presidencies. I shall not go into details; but in regard to Karnataka—and may I add, Andhra—about which Mr. Giri submitted a memorandum—the case for separation has been elaborately worked out with remarkable precision. The Nehru Report made a special reference to these two areas, and the All Parties' Conference at Lucknow in 1928, in adopting the Report, passed a resolution in favour of making Karnataka and Andhra autonomous units of administration. They would be financially self-supporting, the large majority of the inhabitants of these areas have put forward the claim; and both areas satisfy, it seems to me, every test that can be applied for the creation of new Provinces. I hope, therefore, they will receive the earliest attention.

Now, I must pass on to another point in which I have already taken some interest, namely Burma. A Round Table Conference has commenced its work for framing a constitution for a separated Burma, and we have been told that in this India's representatives have no place. It seems to me, Sir, that the whole question of Burma's future has been dealt with from the beginning in a highly unsatisfactory manner. It was brought on the agenda without notice to us last year, and after about half-an-hour's discussion, the Conference in Committee declared itself in favour of separation. In the sub-Committee, one or two of the members of the British Delegation recognised the unfairness of such a hurried decision of so important a question. When I raised it in the Committee, on Lord Russell's report of the sub-Committee, there were several speeches, practically all of them against an announcement of separation without an adequate opportunity being given to all sections of Burman and Indian opinion to express their opinion.

Ultimately, Sir, you gave an assurance to Mr. Jinnah that we should have an opportunity of discussing the question at a Plenary Session. Ten of us, including Messrs. Chintamani and Mody, who are not here to-day, sent a written statement to the Prime Minister on 19th January this year, requesting His Majesty's Government not to commit themselves to a policy of separation without further discussion. To our surprise and regret, we found that in the Prime Minister's concluding speech in the afternoon of that day, a provisional announcement was made in favour of separation.

An official Committee was appointed subsequently in India, consisting of Mr. Nixon and Sir Henry Howard, to work out the financial consequences of separation of both countries. I should have thought that in work of this character, the Committee would include non-official Indians and Burmans. However, the Nixon-Howard report is a remarkable document. It is remarkable mainly for the reason that while it disagrees with Sir Walter Layton's conclusions as embodied in the Simon Report, there seems to be very little agreement between Mr. Nixon and Sir Henry Howard in their discussion of the details of the scheme.

It is not for me to discuss how the Burma Conference will or should discharge its primary task of framing a constitution for a separated Burma. But I observe that the Conference is also to discuss the relations between Burma and India. I cannot understand with whom that discussion is to take place, if India's representatives are not present in the Conference. May I here quote a brief sentence from the first speech that Lord Russell made as Chairman of the Burma sub-Committee on 5th December last year? Referring to the suggestion for a separate Burma Round Table Conference to be held in due course in London, Lord Russell said:—

> "It is obvious, of course, that India would wish to be represented on that Conference to some extent, no doubt, in regard to questions that would arise."

We understood that to mean that India's representatives would have a place on that Conference. But, Sir, our request for the election of ten of our Delegates to the Burma Conference has now been rejected.

I want to refer also to the communiqué issued on 21st August this year by His Majesty's Government, announcing the Burma Conference. It was one of the final acts of the Labour Government, when Mr. Wedgwood Benn was Secretary of State for India. The communiqué stated that the Burma Conference would meet after the completion of the work of the Federal Structure sub-Committee but before the termination of the Plenary Session of the Indian Conference; and that the work of the Burma Conference would be open to review to "all parties concerned." We understood the communiqué to mean that the Prime Minister's assurance, given last year, would be carried out at least at this Plenary Session, and we, who are certainly the foremost among all the parties concerned, would have an opportunity to review the work of the Burma Conference.

Sir, since the issue of that communiqué, there has been a change of government in this country after the last general election. The preoccupations of the new Government have possibly prevented it from commencing the work of the Burma Conference in the manner and at the time indicated in that communiqué. But what is the result? We are deprived of the opportunity, which we expected to have, of reviewing the work of the Burma Conference, and particularly, the relations between the two countries. The Burma Conference is deprived of contact with us in their deliberations. One thing, Sir, is clear. There can be no final decisions until India—not only the Government of India—has had her say in the matter. I hope it may be possible for the Government to declare before the conclusion of this Conference how and when that opportunity will be given to India.

I have referred at some length to the problem of Burma for two reasons. In the first place, I am keenly interested in the future of that Province. But an even more important reason is that there is some danger that the fate of the Burma Conference may also overtake the Indian Conference. Sir, the history of constitutional reforms for India has been a peculiar one. In 1924, a Labour Government appointed the Reform Enquiry Committee, known as the Muddiman Committee. It made hopeful progress for a time; but just at the crucial moment, the Labour Government resigned, and at the general election, the Conservative Party won and assumed office. The result was seen immediately in the Majority Report of the Muddiman Committee; both the Majority and the Minority Reports were rejected by the Government, and the Simon Commission was appointed. Bitter agitation followed, there was boycott and civil disobedience. The Round Table Conference was ultimately called by a Labour Government in 1930. In what spirit it was conceived, and in what manner it would have continued its work was shown by Mr. Wedgwood Benn in the splendid speech he made this afternoon. But there has again been a general election in this country and a National Government is now in power. But, at least, Sir, there is the same Prime Minister. He is committed to the position outlined in his final speech on 19th January last. Only recently, he declared that not only he, but the whole Government stands by that policy. It would have helped us in this plenary session, if before the conclusion we could have had the announcement which he is making to-morrow. We shall have no opportunity of expressing our views on the official statement of His Majesty's Government. We do not know if there will be a continuation of the work begun in this Conference, after we disperse to-morrow. But I profoundly trust that there may be no repetition of the history of 1924. During the last seven years, India has changed rapidly. The masses are more awake and better organised than they were a few years ago. Their discontent, for a variety of reasons, some permanent, others I hope temporary, has never been deeper. The breakdown of this Conference will involve both India and this country in a disaster which will make friendly relations between the two countries impossible in the future.

Sir Shah Nawaz Bhutto: Sir, I must thank you in the first instance, for having afforded me an opportunity to express my views regarding the deliberations over which we have been engaged for the last three months. Our time, Sir, being limited, my speech must, of necessity, be short; but short as it may be, I can assure you that the views expressed therein lack nothing in sincerity of purpose.

I do not propose to refer to the many controversial questions which I think have been sufficiently dealt with by my distinguished predecessors.

The Conference has come to an end without achieving any tangible result, and we are all anxiously looking forward to the statement the Prime Minister proposes to make in winding up the discussions. Whatever that statement may be, I am confident that the significance of the discussions could not have been missed by him. There has been a sharp cleavage of opinion between the different sections, specially in regard to the position of the minorities. What the minorities have been clamouring for is not power, but the right to existence. They refuse to agree to any constitution in which their just and reasonable claims do not find a place. Any transfer of power in order to be real, workable and beneficial, must be made having these facts in mind.

Let me at once say that if we have failed to arrive at an agreement on the question of minorities, the blame lies on the shoulders of those who lightly brush aside safeguards for minorities in any constitutional change. I deeply regret that even the Prime Minister's personal efforts to adjust differences were of no avail.

Sir, I come from an agricultural class of people who form 85 per cent. of His Majesty's subjects in India, and venture to think, can have claim to some knowledge of their needs and difficulties. It is very hard for many here to conceive the state of things in the countryside. I am told that the Congress represents this class of His Majesty's subjects too. I seriously ask them if they have devoted any attention to the amelioration of the condition of these people. Is the stirring up of an agitation at Bardoli and the raising of the Hindu tenants against their Muslim landlords in the United Provinces an indication of their interest?

Sir, the state of these people has been daily growing from bad to worse since the reforms. Taxes have risen, poverty is rampant among them, and their land has already slipped out of their hands into the hands of the moneylenders and the capitalists, who charge 35 to 50 per cent. interest. What is the good of responsible Government, if these conditions cannot be improved? It is only by making the administration cheaper, purer and more sympathetic towards their needs that you can bring contentment and prosperity.

The reasons that have enabled the Congress to secure its present preponderating influence on the political situation are not far to seek. Mostly they are economic. But it is also my considered opinion that this body includes many whom racial discrimination

and lack of equal opportunities have driven into it. Remove that discrimination, grant equal opportunities to your Indian fellow subjects, maintain law and order, protect the people from the tyranny of law-breakers who, in their hearts believe in Constitutional advance, and whom you have ceased to support at present—you cannot play the dual role of beggar and Government at the same time—and cultivate your friends. Do this and the British connection with India may yet continue for very long.

I now turn my attention to the separation of Sind, the Province I come from. It is difficult to offer any detailed criticism on the Report of the Finance Committee on the separation of Sind. It is clear, however, that the Committee have exaggerated the amount of the deficit that Sind would be incurring if separated from Bombay. In coming to their conclusions, they have failed to take into account the world conditions of the last three years. With improvements in these conditions and reductions in the present costly administration, Sind would soon find itself on its own legs. When one considers that at present all the Provinces are showing a budget deficit, too much importance to this aspect would only cloud the real issues. On the other hand, Bombay, with its own commitments, is already a deficit Province, and to keep the burden of Sind on its shoulders would only augment its liability. Self-determination is the keynote of our deliberations and it would be an anomaly if that principle were lost sight of in considering the separation of Sind.

In conclusion, Sir, I tender to the Prime Minister my heartfelt thanks for the most painstaking way in which he has tackled the knotty problems that have confronted us. In devoting so much of his valuable time to the Indian question, he has served, not only India, but done signal service to his own country in bringing into broad relief the sincere goodwill with which the Round Table Conference was invited. His singleness of purpose has endeared him to everyone in this assembly, and I join with the Lord Chancellor in saying that if and when Federal India comes into being, he, with common consent, will be hailed as the " Architect of Federal India ".

Mr. Birla: My Lord, I represent in this Conference along with my two colleagues, Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas, and Mr. Jamal Muhammad, Indian commerce, trade and industries.

Sir, the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry which I have the honour to represent here, is an organisation to which nearly forty-five commercial bodies from all parts of India are affiliated. We have got the entire Indian coal trade affiliated in our Federation. We have got the entire Indian insurance business affiliated to our Federation. We have got the entire shipping trade so far as it is in the hands of Indians, affiliated to our Federation. The tea trade, so far as it is in the hands of Indians, is affiliated to us. The Ahmedabad Cotton Mills, the Punjab Cotton Mills, the Bengal Cotton mills,

and a good many of the Bombay cotton mills are affiliated to the Federation. The same is true of the Indian jute trade, the bullion trade, and Indian banking. Perhaps, besides the Congress Delegation, ours is the only Delegation which is properly elected by the representative bodies and who have come here with a certain mandate. The views, therefore, which I may express here, may be taken as the views of the Indian mercantile community.

Sir, at the conclusion of the last Round Table Conference, when the Premier made his famous declaration, we had the privilege to consider it and at that time we felt that the responsibility at the Centre, as enunciated at the last Round Table Conference was hedged in by so many considerations, so many reservations and safeguards that it would not lead us to the goal which we had in view. Frankly speaking, Sir, we were not at all satisfied with the Statement which the Premier made at the conclusion of the last Round Table Conference. But our misgivings were very much allayed when the famous pact was concluded between Mahatma Gandhi and Lord Irwin, and it was definitely made clear that all the safeguards and reservations were to be in the interests of India. Having this prospect before us we came here with reasonable hopes of finding a satisfactory solution of the constitutional problem. We came here with a determination to do our best; we came here if necessary to make compromises, and to reconcile our conflicting views. We have been working here for the last nine weeks, and it is time that we should frankly state what we feel about our deliberations so far.

If I may say so frankly, we are not at all satisfied with what has taken place here. It has been stated by some of my colleagues here that the Round Table Conference has been a success. I should not be fair to myself and my colleagues if I did not say that we do not take the same optimistic view of our deliberations. Let me put before you, Sir, in a few words what we feel. For the first six weeks we had no discussion on the essentials. We came here to discuss the reservations and such safeguards as may be demonstrated to be in the interest of India; and for six weeks we did not have a whisper of discussion on the safeguards. Then we had some half-hearted discussion, and, if I may put it so, the net result has been that, far from making any advance on the conclusions arrived at the last Round Table Conference, we have receded to the region of the Simon Report or the Government of India Despatch. After all, we have to judge of our success or failure from the reports which have been presented to this Conference, and I submit that the reports do not warrant any optimistic view.

I will confess that so far as the questions of military and external relations are concerned, I do not propose to touch them because they are beyond me; but if I may briefly analyse the reports—particularly the report dealing with financial safeguards, I may say that there is not a shadow of control proposed to be given to the future Indian Government in the sphere of finance. Sir, let me briefly put before you a picture of the present Finance Department

of the Government of India. What is it that the Finance Department at present does? It controls the currency and exchange, and it also controls the revenue and expenditure of the Government. The Budget of the Government of India, excluding Railway finance, amounts to nearly 90 crores. Now let us analyse it and see what amount of control, if any, we are getting on the finance of India. I would start first of all with the Reserve Bank and the control of currency and exchange; but before I do so I may also point out that there is another department of the Government of India which is called the Commerce Department and which controls the Indian railways. The budget of the Indian Railways amounts to nearly 40 crores.

Mr. Joshi: 100 crores.

Mr. Birla: I mean the net budget. I am not talking of the gross budget. It is 40 crores. Now, Sir, that is a very important department; and when we talk of financial control with safeguards, the natural inference which one is to draw is that the Commerce Department will be transferred to popular control without any safeguards; but I doubt whether that is so. We have not at any length discussed the position of the Indian Railways, but a small paragraph has been put in on page 19 of the Federal Structure Committee's Report of the last Round Table Conference where it is stated that "in this connection the sub-Committee took notice of the proposal that a statutory railway authority should be established, and are of opinion that this should be done if after expert examination this course seems to be desirable." Nothing is mentioned as to whether this Statutory Board is to be constituted by the Federal Legislature or by any other authority. Nothing has been mentioned as to who is going to control the future policy of the proposed Statutory Board. This is a very important department, and I regret to note that, in spite of the fact that the matter was brought to the notice of the Lord Chancellor by my colleague, Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas, in the Federal Structure Committee, no notice was taken of it, and a department which has control of 40 crores (net), or of about 100 crores (gross), has still been left untouched, with its functions and policy undefined. Therefore, I cannot say whether it is the desire of this Conference that this department should be entirely put under the control of the popular minister, or if there are going to be certain reservations even in regard to this department.

Coming to the Finance Department as it is constituted as such, let us see, Sir, what reservations or safeguards have been proposed. I will take first of all the question of currency and exchange. It is proposed that a Reserve Bank should be established to control day to day transactions so far as they concern currency and exchange, but, as regards the power of amending the Indian Currency Act, it is still proposed that the matter should be left with the Governor-General. I will read this paragraph:—

> "With the same object again provision should be made requiring the Governor-General's previous sanction to the

introduction of a bill to amend the Paper Currency and Coinage Act, on the lines of section 67 of the Government of India Act."

Thus so far as currency and exchange are concerned, they are not to be entirely transferred to popular control. The Reserve Bank would be there and it would the creation of the Federal Legislature, but the fundamental powers so far as the question of the policy of exchange is concerned will still rest with the Governor-General.

Then, Sir, we come to the general budget, that is, the revenue and expenditure, which, as I said, amounts to 90 crores. Well, the finance of the Army, it is proposed, should be controlled by the Crown, and that takes away 47 crores. Then there is the question of debt services, and that amounts to 15 crores and is again to be reserved to the Crown. Then there is the question of pensions and other things amounting to 10 crores, and that again is reserved for the Crown. Out of a budget of 90 crores, 72 crores or even more is to be reserved to the Crown. Out of the total functions of the Finance Department, currency and exchange is to be controlled by the Governor-General. Out of a budget of 90 crores, 72 crores are to be controlled by the Governor-General. May I ask, Sir, what is left after that?

I was not at all surprised when I found that wide powers were proposed to be given to the Governor-General, the powers with regard to intervention in budgetary arrangements given in paragraph 18 and certain powers given in paragraph 14; because, when you mortgage 80 per cent. of your revenue, you must give powers of that sort. When my esteemed friend, Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, was joining issue with Lord Reading on the question of certification, I could not help feeling that he was not looking at the facts squarely; I felt that Lord Reading was more logical; because, if you hand over 80 per cent. of your revenues to the Crown, how could you insist that safeguards should be less rigid? I maintain, Sir, that as long as 80 per cent. of our revenue is mortgaged there is no way of avoiding these safeguards. Therefore the financial control could never be effective whether it is to-day or twenty years hence or even 100 years hence so long as this position is maintained. I maintain that until you reduce this mortgage the financial control will never be effective. If we want to have control over our finances let us first of all deal with the basis on which these safeguards are built. Let us reduce the mortgage first and then discuss safeguards. Safeguards then probably would be tolerable even if they are rigid, but as the position stands at present, and with the proposals before us of reserving 70 crores out of 90 crores to the Crown, I say that even if the safeguards are relaxed it is not possible to get any effective control over finance. We must see things as they are and not deceive ourselves into thinking that by creating an Advisory Council here or by doing something else there we are going to get anything of the kind we desire. Therefore let us first of all see whether we can or cannot reduce the mortgage.

I maintain that with sincerity and goodwill it is possible to reduce these heavy charges. I as briefly as possible, Sir, propose to lay before you how it is possible. It is possible as I have said only if there is goodwill, if there is a genuine desire to come to some honourable settlement. If there is no desire and no goodwill then the task becomes impossible. But in any case I think it my duty to lay before you my views in this connection.

Let us take first of all our military charges. In 1913 they amounted to 33 crores. They went up to 59 crores and now they are about 47 crores. The Simon Commission stated that comparing the figures of 1913 with those of 1928 the increase was 100 per cent. Military expenditure in India in 1928 as compared with 1913 registered an increase of something like 100 per cent. Now, Sir, what has been the increase in other countries? These are not my figures. The figures have been compiled by the Simon Commission and I am only quoting them. In the Dominions the increase was only 33 per cent. In Great Britain the increase has been 48 per cent. Would you not admit, Sir, that this increase is simply monstrous? What is the reason for this increase? Prices have not risen since 1913. We have come back to the same level. It is quite correct that there was an increase in prices in the interim period but now the level is more or less the same as in 1913. No one can suggest that the danger to the peace of India has been in any way aggravated since 1913. I should say that with the invention of new weapons, with aerial warfare, with the growing mechanisation of the army, military expenditure should have gone down. It is impossible for anyone to maintain that such an increase is at all justified.

I am a layman and I cannot analyse in detail where the army expenditure should be reduced but as a layman and a man with common-sense I can at least say this much that there is no justification for any increase above the figure at which it stood in 1913, which was 33 crores. I say, Sir, that with genuine desire and goodwill it is possible to bring down the army expenditure at least to the level of 1913. Then, Sir, the Simon Commission said that it is not fair that all the military expenditure should be charged to the Indian revenues. I agree, I wish, Sir, that the Prime Minister had been in the Chair just now because this was his opinion also. In fact he went to the length of saying that 90 per cent. of the Indian military expenditure should be charged to the Imperial revenues. I would be a little modest. He said 90 per cent., and I will be satisfied with less, but I think no one can resist the proposition that a substantial portion of our military charges are for Imperial purposes and should not be debited to the Indian revenues. Now, Sir, I think all will agree that it is possible to bring down the military expenditure to a much lower level. That is one item over which I think we ought to have substantial agreement. It is in the interest of England, it is in the interest of India that we must economise in that direction.

Coming to the next item, namely, of debt service, I need not assure you, because the Congress has already assured all, that it is not the intention of any one to escape one single farthing of our just obligations, but there are claims which I maintain ought to be examined. The Congress has issued a Report, and I know that some of you may simply laugh and say that this is a ridiculous claim which could never be entertained, but I maintain that some of the claims that have been made by the Congress could be justified, at any rate. Any impartial observer would come only to one conclusion, that there are a number of items which should never have been debited to the Indian revenue: expenditure on account of the Egyptian War, expenditure on account of the Sudan War, expenditure on account of the Abyssinian War. May I ask what India had to do with all these wars? Is it not fair that we should examine our obligations and see whether some of the items which were debited to the Indian revenue should not now be debited to the British revenue? Then, again, if it is contended, as it has been even by the Simon Commission, that a portion of the military expenditure should in future be charged to the Imperial revenue, may I ask: what about the past? It is all right to say that adjustment should be made in future, but I say, what about the past? It is only a question of principle. If in the past the total expenditure has been charged to the Indian exchequer and if it is proved that a portion in future should be debited to the British revenue there is no reason why we should not adjust also our past accounts. I am sure there is a very strong case for the investigation of our liabilities, and if our liabilities were examined by any impartial tribunal—I do not mean the League of Nations—I say if our liabilities were examined by any impartial tribunal composed of Englishmen and Indians they could come only to one conclusion: that India has been treated unjustly and that a large amount should never have been charged to the Indian revenues, and that now there should be an equitable adjustment of India's burden.

If, Sir, we attacked only these two items we could make a substantial reduction. Then, if we could so reduce our mortgage, probably the safeguards would be tolerable. Probably you would not insist on safeguards of the kind on which you are insisting at present, because then the percentage which is now 80 would go down; it may be below 50, it may go down even to 40, and therefore you would not be insisting on the same rigidity as you are insisting on to-day. I again suggest, Sir, that if we are to insist on complete financial control, whether to-day or twenty years hence, you will have to face this problem; you will have to reduce these mortgages. Until then it is not possible to have effective control.

Now, Sir, let us consider this question from another angle. What is the implication of an 80 per cent. mortgage? We Indians have maintained all along that the Indian administration is a most costly administration. It may be very efficient. All the same it cannot be denied that it is a very costly administration. Now

supposing the future Finance Minister, with the approval of his Cabinet, decided that economies should be made in certain respects, where is he going to make those economies? Out of 90 crores, 72 crores is already reserved to the Governor-General which the Finance Minister cannot touch, which he should not touch. There are only 20 crores left. What economies is he going to effect in 20 crores? He may effect paltry economies here and there, but he cannot make any substantial economy. And, over and above that, he must have money for future developments in India. Where is he going to find the money? You are putting a sort of permanent seal on the extravagance of the past administration. He cannot touch your 70 crores; he must impose new taxation; and how is he going to find new taxation? He must be faced with a deficit budget every year. Do you think this is the kind of financial control which we want? It is something like having possession of the Treasury vaults without its contents. I do not think any self-respecting Finance Member could carry on with all these rigid safeguards and will care to accept office with a stipulation that 72 crores every year, without questioning the justification, shall be handed over to the Governor-General.

Sir, much has been said about satisfying the City financiers. Speaker after speaker got up and talked of our sterling debts, as if all our liabilities confined to them. I was a little pained when I heard my esteemed friend Sir Padamji Ginwala get up and say that his peace of mind would not be disturbed even if he found the mortgagee in possession. In fact I was very much pained to hear that. We all take it for granted that we have to satisfy only the City financiers; but we forget that half of the Indian liabilities have been provided by the Indian investor.

Sir P. Ginwala: I am sorry to interrupt my friend, but I made no distinction between sterling and rupee debts at all.

Mr. Birla: Well, Sir, he said even if he found the mortgagee in possession—

Sir P. Ginwala: The legal position was such. I did not say he was in possession.

Mr. Birla: I am coming to that. He said that even if he found the mortgagee in possession.

Sir P. Ginwala: No, not the mortgagee in possession—even if the legal position was that the mortgagee was in possession.

Mr. Birla: Who is the mortgagee? Is it the City financier alone?

Sir P. Ginwala: No, I did not say that.

Mr. Birla: It is not the City financier alone. Well, if it is also the Indian investor, may I ask if the Indian investors have sent their representative here to ask for these safeguards? For whose benefit are we providing these safeguards? Satisfy the City financier by all means; I am prepared to satisfy him; but I would issue a warning to my friends not to run too much after the City financier, trying to woo him, because you have not only to satisfy

him, but, more than that you have to satisfy your Indian investors; and if you mortgage 80 per cent. of your revenues the Indian investor is not going to be satisfied with that sort of finance. He does not want that sort of safeguard. In whose interest are you going to mortgage 80 per cent. of our revenue? Surely not in the interest of the Indian investor.

I therefore maintain, Sir, that you may satisfy the City financiers, but do not ignore the Indian investor, because if you lose his confidence you cannot maintain the credit of the Indian Government even for one day. This Government could not do it and your Government shall not do it. It is impossible for any Government to maintain the credit of India without inspiring confidence in the Indian investor. Who is going to provide money for all the new developments? Certainly not the City financiers. It is the Indian investor who is going to provide the money, and you should do nothing which may lose you his confidence.

Did the Argentine or America, when they borrowed money from London, provide any safeguards in their constitutions? Why should the City financiers ask for constitutional safeguards from us? After all, we have been with them and we want to be with them as their partners. The Argentine is not your partner; America is not your partner. Still, America borrowed a large amount of money before the War, and they never provided any safeguards of the kind which you are providing in our constitution. They did not provide anything of the kind in their constitution. Therefore I issue a warning that you should not ignore the Indian investor. And I want to make it clear that the Indian investor does not want these safeguards; he detests these safeguards, because these safeguards which are proposed are not in his interest; they are in the interests of the City financiers. He knows very well that if 80 per cent. of the revenue is mortgaged to London, to the Governor-General, then his position is simply jeopardised. His position is not at all secure. And, therefore, we strongly oppose these safeguards.

It may be asked whether it is possible to prepare a workable scheme and to that I would answer that it is. I said at the beginning that it was possible to prepare a workable scheme provided there is goodwill, there is sincerity, and there is a genuine desire to come to some sort of amicable settlement; but, Sir, I very much regret to have to confess that that atmosphere is totally lacking at present here.

The last Report by the Federal Structure Committee on safeguards is worse than it was last year. It has been decided that you cannot define financial safeguards at present. The shadow of control which the last Round Table Conference proposed to give has been obliterated and indeed wiped out of existence. I maintain, therefore, that it does not look at present as if there was a genuine desire to come to an amicable agreement. We have been talking of safeguards and that sort of thing so far simply to waste our time. If there was a genuine desire to do so, I maintain it is possible to

arrive at an amicable solution; but, whatever may be said, whatever protests may be made from the Government benches, the fact remains that if the mandate "Wind up the Conference and send Gandhi back" has not been obeyed in the letter, at least it has been obeyed in the spirit. To-morrow may show a change of heart, but up to this time I confess frankly that I do not see any genuine desire to come to any workable agreement.

You may, if you like, Sir, blame us for not having arrived at a communal settlement. I deplore the fact and I confess our failure. If you like you may exploit it, but may I put this point to you. Have you perfect unanimity in your own country? Have you settled your minority problem? Are you all united on the question of tariffs and many other problems? Certainly not. Why then should you exaggerate our disunity? There are reasons for this disunity, and I hope we shall be able to come to some agreement among ourselves; but I would warn you not to exaggerate it and not to take advantage of it.

The Conference may be wound up and Mahatma Gandhi may be sent back, but, may I ask, what next? Have you got any programme? People here swear by law and order, and I should like to say, Sir, that we business men too, are equally for law and order. It is under law and order that business men thrive. Disturbance, discontent and anarchy do no good to any one, certainly not to business men.

The difference, however, between us and those reactionaries who have been crying hoarse for law and order and who have been swearing by strong government is this, that while we really want law and order in India the reactionaries here are actually driving the country towards disorder, strife and anarchy. They are not leading the country towards law and order. We were sermonized on the efficacy of persuasion and reason. It was said that the policy of the Congress was a policy of negation, a policy of destruction, a sterile policy. What have you proved? We have been discussing, reasoning and trying to persuade you for the last nine weeks. What is the result? We are nowhere. Has it not been proved by your actions that the policy of persuasion and of reason has failed?

I am sorry to have to say that, but, as a simple-minded man, I cannot draw any other inference. You have said in so many words that the policy of persuasion has failed, and what is it that you are doing? You are challenging the Congress to start the civil disobedience movement again. In whose interest do you want to head the country towards disorder and strife? Surely not in the interest of India; surely not in the interest of England. I feel puzzled because what are the implications of the civil disobedience movement? I do not want to frighten—I have no desire to do so—but as a business man I think, Sir, it is my duty that I should lay these facts before you. Now, what are the implications of the civil disobedience movement, the no-tax campaign. As a result of it the land revenue constituting an item of 35 crores, suffers.

Excise goes down. That constitutes an item of 20 crores. Business suffers and the result is that the Income-tax goes down. Boycott foreign goods and Customs decline. The breaking of the salt laws means that the salt revenue goes down. The result is that there is again a deficit in the budgets, Central and Provincial. You have been emphasising the importance of the credit of India. What happens to the credit of India and how are you going to balance the budget? Not through new taxes because no source of taxation has been left untouched. Not through borrowing because when a country is in a disturbed condition no investor, whether he be an Englishman or an Indian, cares to invest his money in Government securities. The result is that you must be prepared to remit money from England to govern the country. I put this question: In whose interests is this all going to happen? Is it going to do any good to your trade in India, any good to your industries, any good to your sterling? Whom is it going to benefit? I ask this question and I feel puzzled. The other day a friend of mine paid Englishmen the compliment of being a nation of shopkeepers. It was a compliment. When I see a nation of shopkeepers—I am using that phrase in a complimentary sense—when I see men of commonsense, business men ready to remit money simply to govern a country which could be governed in other ways, better, cheaper and really satisfactorily, I do not understand for whose benefit it is all happening. There is the other side of the picture. Lord—then Mr.—Snowden once rightly remarked that if you increased the purchasing power of each person in India by a farthing per day there would be an increase in your trade of 60 million pounds per annum. Those are the two pictures. Why should we not choose the better of the two? Why cannot we come to some sort of honourable settlement by which we can have peace and prosperity in the country? Law and order I certainly want, but I say that law and order cannot be maintained unless the country is governed with the consent of the people.

No Government can be strong enough to govern a country without its consent. Therefore I maintain that if you desire law and order the condition is that you must govern us with the consent of the people or the people must govern themselves and be your friends and your partners. I warn you again that you will be making the greatest mistake of your life if you do not take the opportunity of coming to a friendly settlement. An English friend of mine said the other day " Fellows, you made the greatest mistake of your lives in not coming to the Round Table Conference in 1930, when the Labour Government was in power and the Government was very sympathetic." I do not know whether there is any truth or not in that statement but I say it is truth that it would be the greatest mistake of your lives if you do not take the opportunity of coming to terms with India. I know the youth of my country. It is quite possible that a few years hence you will not have to deal with men like Mr. Gandhi who has proved in many respects a greater Conservative than many of you, you may not have to deal with Princes, you may not have to deal with capitalists

like myself, you may have to deal with new men, new conditions, new ideas, and new ambitions. Beware of that.

There are two clear paths. One of them will lead to ruin, destruction, strife and anarchy; another to peace, contentment and prosperity. Which will England choose? I hope, Sir, that the statesmanship of England will rise to the occasion and choose the path of goodwill, contentment, peace and prosperity.

Mr. Tambe: My Lord, in view of the number of presons who wish to speak to-night I should have denied myself the privilege of addressing the Conference, as I do not wish to place the views of any particular class of the community before the Conference, but certain remarks fell from Sir Akbar Hydari concerning the position of Berar, and as I am the only representative who hails from Berar I think I should state the cause of Berar before the Conference. The people of Berar have sent in representations to the Government and I am sure they will be considered at the proper time. Therefore I shall not take up much of the time of the Conference by going into details; I shall make a very short statement.

Sir Akbar Hydari has stated to the effect that Berar cannot be regarded as anything but an Indian State under the sovereignty of His Exalted Highness the Nizam and its government must accord with this fact. He also expressed that whilst safeguarding his rights H. E. H. the Nizam has no wish to deny to his subjects of Berar as great a measure of autonomy as may be found possible for the British Indian Provinces.

I am thankful to Sir Akbar Hydari for the latter part of the above statement and for clearing the position. It is difficult, however, to define the exact status of Berar in its present condition. Technically, I admit it is not British India, but so far as its administration is concerned its governance has been permanently transferred to British Government by the treaty of 1902, which reaffirms the sovereignty of and reserves to H.E.H. the Nizam an annual payment of a fixed sum. The Province has been continuously under British administration since 1853, nearly eighty years now, and is administered as a part of a British-Indian Province, *viz.*, the Central Provinces, for the last thirty years. Its people are enjoying the same political rights and privileges as the people of the other part. It is for all purposes of governance treated as part of British India.

Naturally its people desire that Berar should find a place in the Federation as a separate federating unit in the same way as any British-Indian Province, with power to elect its representative to the Federal Legislature and to enjoy the same type of Provincial government as will be obtaining therein. It may be noted that even at present Berar is electing its representatives to the Central Legislature independently.

I do not suggest for a moment that the rights affirmed and reserved to H. E. H. the Nizam by the agreement of 1902 should in any way be prejudiced, but if anything more is implied in the

former part of Sir Akbar Hydari's statement I must clearly state that the people of Berar do not want to be treated in any way differently from any British-Indian Province.

Sir Chimanlal Setalvad: Sir, I am glad at this stage of the Conference to have the opportunity of saying a few words. Deeply indebted as we are to the Prime Minister, the Lord Chancellor and other Members of the British Delegation, we cannot be too grateful to Lord Reading for the very helpful part he has played in the deliberations of this Conference. As we all know there were occasions in this Conference and the Federal Structure Committee when the ship was going to founder and on every occasion Lord Reading came to the rescue. His speech this morning, as forcible as it was sincere, will reassure millions in India that the real British mind is not represented by the Mestons or the Rothermere Press.

What has emerged from the discussions is this, that the way of self-government in India lies in federation; and I endorse what fell from my friends Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and Mr. Jayakar that that is the ideal that has to be worked out as soon as possible. One no doubt realises the difficulties in the way of effecting the federation we have in view. There are various investigations to be made, various difficulties to be surmounted; but I do say this with all earnestness that, whatever difficulties there are to be surmounted, whatever investigations have to be made, speed up all that and arrive at the Federation as early as possible. Pray do not use those difficulties and those investigations as a pretex for delaying self-government in India. Pray do not, in the end, after those investigations have been made, say that federation is not possible and therefore responsibility at the Centre is not possible. No doubt Federation and Central responsibility are linked together, but make up your mind to bring about federation in as short a time as possible, for, let me assure you, India is in no mood for any great delay in this matter; she is determined to be free at as early a date as possible, though as Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru said, we are quite willing to give reasonable time to work out the federation scheme and put it into operation.

Here I must say, Sir, that I agree with my friend that any attempt to give these reforms by instalments, as has been suggested in various quarters—for instance, to begin with Provincial autonomy and then work up to Central responsibility and Federation later—is a scheme that is doomed to failure.

Provincial autonomy without Central responsibility will really be a sham and an illusion. If you look at the matter squarely you will recognise that the need for Central responsibility is more urgent than any other reform in India. Take the present state of things at the Centre. You have there a standing hostile elected majority, and the Government always in a minority. That engenders, and must engender, irresponsibility on both sides. The elected members of the Legislative Assembly know that whatever they do the King's Government will be carried on, and therefore, as they have not the burden of responsibility cast on them, as

would be the case in any democratic institution, they are bound to be, and have in fact become, and will still more become, irresponsible. On the other hand, in the same manner the Government, knowing that they have the power of certification, that they have the power of doing everything over the heads of the Assembly whatever the vote of the Assembly may be, are equally irresponsible on the other side. I therefore say, Sir, that responsibility at the Centre is the most urgent need of India, and you should take that in hand instead of quarrelling about Provincial autonomy and things of that character.

My Lord, there are various difficulties in the way of working out the constitution in the manner in which we want it to be worked out. There is no doubt that the question of the minorities has not yet been solved. I may say at once that all right thinking men will admit that the minorities have to be satisfied, that the minorities have to be assured of their position in the new constitution, and the majority community must go to great lengths to make concessions to the minorities, but I do say, My Lord, that the difficulty of solving the minorities question has been too much exaggerated in this Conference as well as outside. It has been made to appear that all these communities are disagreed on almost every point and are at loggerheads about every matter, which is far from the truth. If you critically analyse the points of difference, I make bold to say that the points of agreement are many more than the points of disagreement.

As regards the essential and fundamental safeguards to which any minority is entitled, namely, the protection of their religion, culture, and their place in the Services, and so on, there is really general agreement; formulas to that end were drafted last year, and I do not think any right minded-person wishes to go back upon them.

The whole difficulty centres round the problem of the Punjab and of Bengal, and I cannot help thinking, My Lord, that with a little more goodwill and give and take, these problems should not be beyond solution. In any case, if you narrow down the points of difference to the Punjab and Bengal, it is a matter which even the Government can very well decide with satisfaction to the parties concerned.

There remains the question of joint or separate electorates. I have said before and I am still convinced that joint electorates are much better in the interests of the minorities themselves, and are certainly in the interests of the Muslim community, but however that may be, if the bulk of the Muslim community are still not convinced about it and are still insisting on separate electorates, why then, let them have them for the moment, until they see better where their interests lie.

But, My Lord, whatever you do I do hope that provision will be made, whenever this question is solved, that any person, whether he be a Muslim or a Christian or belongs to any other minority community, who wishes to be in the joint electorate shall be allowed

to do so immediately he declares his desire. There is no reason why the individual liberty of action of any person should be fettered by the bulk of his community. Further, a device of that character would serve this purpose; it would demonstrate, as time goes on, where the ruling feeling in any community lies, whether in favour of joint electorates or of separate electorates. It would also afford a door for ultimately bringing the people into the joint electorates when they thought it was better for them to be there. I think, therefore, that the solution of the minorities question should not stand in the way of that constitutional advance which is more than due to India.

Then, Sir, coming to the question of the various safeguards and reservations in the constitution, I cannot help thinking that this question of reservations and safeguards has not received the treatment and the attention in the Federal Structure Committee which such a question deserved. If I may say so, with due respect to the members of that Committee, this question has in a manner been slurred over.

A lot of time was devoted to settling the number of members of this Legislature or the other and questions of that character.

Mr. Sastri: That was not settled either.

Sir Chimanlal Setalvad: That was not settled either but a good lot of time was spent on that and comparatively little attention was given and very little progress was made with regard to those reservations and safeguards. Taking the question of the Army, I agree with Mr. Birla that the expenditure on the Army in India is quite out of proportion to the financial capacity of the country. It is up to British statesmen to see that investigation is made and the expenditure on the Army brought down to proper proportions. The present burden is too heavy for India to bear and if she is made to bear that burden still in the future I do not see how financially the country can prosper.

Then coming to Finance, nobody need fear that Indians themselves will be unmindful of the necessity of maintaining the credit of India in the world's markets. Why should Indians be acting suicidally about things which will damage the credit of India? Therefore I ask British statesmen to trust India and to trust Indians to do the right thing in these matters.

I quite agree that there should be some safeguards, but whatever those safeguards are they should be internal in the country itself and not external or imposed upon the country by the authority of the Secretary of State. That is the way in which I view the formation of the Financial Council which has been suggested by Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru. The point is this, Mr. Chairman, that we do not want financial policy to be dictated from Whitehall as it is at present. There are cases even when the Government of India as at present constituted is overruled by the Secretary of State. We do not want financial policy to be dictated from England. It

should be vested in the Government of India which will come into existence under the new constitution.

Then I come, Sir, to the question of commercial discrimination. Let me assure you, Sir, that nobody desires unjustly to discriminate against any particular community or against any particular interests. It must be remembered that every Dominion has the inherent right to define its citizens. Therefore I do not agree, Sir, that it should be dictated to India how her citizenship should be defined. If you do that you are taking away one of the attributes of Dominion Status. It does not mean that no security is to be afforded to British interests in India, but let that be done by convention and not by statute. As you will remember, Sir, Mr. Cosgrave stated the other day in connection with the Statute of Westminster that you cannot create goodwill by statute or by regulation. Depend upon it, therefore, that this must depend upon goodwill. Let the Englishman in India trust the Indian in the new Indian Government, and I am sure he will act both fairly and justly.

Mr. Chairman, I do not want to detain the Conference any further, but I repeat what I said before, speed up. Do bring about the Federation, the constitution, in full form as early as possible. India is in no mood to wait, and if you allow time to pass you will have to deal with still more difficult conditions in India. In the common interests of India speed up and do the right thing.

Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas: My Lord, I should not have thought it necessary to overburden the already heavy list of speakers which is in your hands if I had not thought it my duty to put before the full Conference two points which I think require to be considered by the Conference as a whole. I do not wish to refer at all to the necessity of the Government decision, which we will hear to-morrow, not being restricted only to the introduction of Provincial autonomy but also giving us fair and reasonable scope in connection with Central responsibility.

I wish to restrict myself to-day, Sir, to a more immediate purpose, the purpose being the problem which faces India in common with the rest of the world as a result of what has been called the " economic blizzard " which has been blowing all over the world. May I venture to ask what it is that this Government proposes to do in connection with saving India from the worst effects of this " economic blizzard "? Ever since I came here I have been greatly struck by the manner in which you here, Sir, forgetting your party differences, called for a National Government, and the emphatic and unequivocal manner in which your electors returned a National Government. One cannot help being impressed by the extraordinarily short notice which your House of Commons gave to the country at large before putting on heavy import duties to the extent of 50 per cent. recently, and in some cases power to collect that duty with retrospective effect. This cannot but strike one as being a National Government working on lines which are regarded as national. What is to be done in India

for the next year or two, may I enquire? Is the Government in India to be carried on in the same old manner in which it has been carried on during the last five, ten or twenty years, with protests from the taxpayer, with protests from the commercial community, with protests from the industrialist, with great groans from the agriculturist, for whom everybody is never tired of claiming the greatest sympathy. I venture to submit to you, Sir, that the Legislative Assembly in India has given signal proof of its disapproval of the manner in which they regard the administration that is being carried on. For only a few days back we heard of the Assembly having thrown out the Finance Bill which carried the emergency taxation to the extent of about seven crores or so. I heard in the City here very serious complaints from men who do not know the conditions in India, but who judge of them from what they think would ordinarily be done here. I venture to ask whether this is not a thing which requires immediate action from the authorities whilst you are making your enquiries and are making up your minds as to what should be done next regarding our constitutional reform? Is it to be expected that any further taxation will be voted easily by the Legislature in India, be it either Central or Provincial?

Sir, I had the honour and the privilege of leading a deputation in 1922 before Lord Reading, and then I was in company with representatives of British commerce. It was a deputation which consisted of representatives of two wings of commerce in India. We both then said that we felt that the taxable capacity of the Indian had been reached, and in the case of the Indian commercial community I said that it had been overburdened. Taxation since then has not gone down in India; it is going up by leaps and bounds. Last April fourteen crores was voted by the Legislative Assembly. Only this morning another six to seven crores was suggested; the Assembly threw it out. The Viceroy, after meeting leaders of parties at the Viceregal Lodge at Delhi, had to certify it. I wish to ask whether it is the intention of the British Cabinet to tolerate for the next year or two years this administration being carried on in India by certification and in spite of protests from all over the country?

Your currency policy here, Sir, seems to me to be strikingly different from the way in which India is being treated. You cut away from the gold standard here over-night or by a method which was once described in India as a nocturnal adventure. You did that and your people here are taking the comfort that prices are going up for the agriculturist. But the interest of England regarding higher prices is insignificantly small compared with the interest of India regarding higher prices to her agriculturists. You import raw materials, and therefore your depreciated exchange does not benefit you to the same extent in England as it benefits us in India, with 80 per cent. of our population engaged in agriculture, with the credit of the country, nay, the very existence of the country depending upon her agricultural operations. By the currency policy which has been followed and persisted in in spite

of protest from all over the country, you still persist in maintaining in India an exchange which is not only not lower but is certainly higher than the one which prevailed on the 21st September last. On the 21st September last, when England was on the gold standard and India was on the gold standard, the sterling exchange was 1*s.* 5¾*d.* You have gone down here from 4·86 to 3·40 to the £ to-day I hear. India has been kept linked to sterling, but the sterling has gone up from 1*s.* 5¾*d.* since 21st September last. It went up by as much as 7/16ths and is at 1*s.* 6⅛*d.* to-day. We are given the consolation that as sterling depreciates against gold, so India benefits as far as the gold standard countries are concerned. But I venture to ask how many countries there are among the customers of the raw material of India which are on the gold standard? Is not sterling the main currency in which the dealings of western Europe at present are carried on? If so, how do you justify this in the name of justice and fair play? How do you justify the sympathy which you claim to have for the masses of India and the agriculturists? This appreciation, has, I submit with all deference, no parallel in any country which can talk of doing justice to the masses of another country over which it rules.

I submit, Sir, that this is a palpable act of injustice which is intolerable and which must be set right.

There is, however, one further point about it which is a tragedy. You have not only linked us to sterling, but you have linked us to sterling down below, and you have left the top open. According to the Statute, the Government of India need not come in to resist any rise in the exchange except at 1*s.* 6*d.* gold, and 1*s.* 6*d.* gold to-day, with a 20 per cent. and more depreciation against gold, would work out at about 1*s.* 9*d.* sterling. Is this fair? Is this tolerable? I am surprised that for the last six weeks, although we have been appealing to the India Office and asking them to examine this matter, we have not had any reply at all.

We are told that conditions all the world over are bad. Conditions may be bad all the world over, but people there may have the power to bear it. We refuse to bear it, and we ask for justice. Here is an earnest of what you may be giving to us to-morrow and hereafter. In the name of the agriculturists of India, I say that either all this that we are going through here is—to use a word which I do not want to be misunderstood—a sham or you must do justice to the tiller of the soil in India, who has been groaning under the handicap and injustice which has been concentrated on him ever since 1924.

Sir, the next few months in India will be very critical months. The next few months will be critical all over the world. In India they will be critical for the tiller of the soil, and, for the masses in the rural areas generally much more than people who have not been to India or who are not acquainted with the conditions in India can possibly realise.

I wish to ask, Sir, whether, when the tune is called by somebody else, it is fair to ask the Legislative Assembly in India to go on

paying the piper? Is it fair for you to expect the Legislative Assembly, if they realise and understand what is meant by voting crore upon crore of additional taxation, to go on giving you a blank cheque when you do not attend to these very primary objects, for which over here in your country you take swift action without even waiting to consult anybody outside your Government offices? You took action by executive action, and then went to Parliament to get that action of 21st September last ratified.

I fear, Sir, that the conditions which threaten us in the near future in India will create a lot of difficulties in the administration in India even during the next year or two years. I understand that people here feel somewhat perturbed about the credit of India. A great deal has been said about the necessity of India maintaining her credit. A good deal has been said here and in the Federal Structure Committee regarding persons in the commercial community and engaged in business in India realising the necessity of preserving India's credit. In fact, Sir, the higher ratio over our pre-war ratio was kept up in India over a period of three years at the sacrifice of India's hard-earned gold and sterling resources in the currency reserve, in the name of India's credit abroad. I find, Sir, that that credit of India to which so much importance is being attached—and I am one of those who do not minimise that importance—was referred to by Sir Samuel Hoare in the final statement which he made at the Federal Structure Committee in connection with the financial safeguards. I would not trouble the Conference with my remarks on that statement, but unfortunately, as things have been going on here, Sir Samuel Hoare could only make that statement after our discussion was over, and immediately after his statement was made we had no option but to go on to the consideration of our draft Report on the financial safeguards.

I will read a pertinent sentence from Sir Samuel Hoare's statement. The quotation runs as follows:—

> "One word as to the necessity of safeguards. So long as the Crown remains responsible for the defence of India, the funds necessary for that purpose will have to be provided and the principal and interest on sterling debt issued in the name of the Secretary of State for India must be secured, as must also the salaries and pensions of officers appointed under Parliamentary authority; and, as the provident and pensions funds which have been fed by subscriptions from officers have never been funded, but remain a floating obligation on the revenues of India, responsibility for payments to retired officers and their dependents must remain with the Secretary of State until any new government is in a position to provide sufficient capital to enable trust funds to be established."

All through the discussions, Sir, we never heard from anybody—there was of course no Government spokesmen at the Federal Structure Committee—that the Secretary of State's intention was that until we were able to fund these pension obligations we could not expect to be masters in our own house. May I ask, Sir, whether

any countries can be named to me—because I am very ignorant about information in this connection regarding other countries—where these liabilities are funded and kept separate? If they are so funded are they so funded in the securities of that Government, or are they funded in gold, or are they funded in Sterling securities or the securities of a foreign country? It strikes me that this order of the Right Honourable gentleman, the Secretary of State for India, is somewhat on the tall side, but it must be good enough for India in order that India may maintain her credit abroad.

I fully agree with one of my friends who stated that if a party must borrow it is the ordinary practice that he must satisfy the lender. Of course if I must borrow who will look at me unless I am prepared to say yes to the lender's terms? But surely, Sir, I have the right, the privilege of always judging for myself whether I will borrow or will not borrow. I therefore feel that if so much is to be made of India's borrowings abroad it is imperatively necessary for His Majesty's Government to instruct the Government of India never to borrow afresh outside India except with the consent and definite resolution of the Legislative Assembly. Surely that is a proposition to which nobody can take exception. I am one of those, Sir, who have always put great faith in the development of my country, but if such arguments are to be hurled at me when I come and ask for the freedom of my country, if I am to be faced with all these—shall I call them?—truisms about a borrower having no choice and the lender's terms having to be accepted, I will say as a citizen of India and a son of India that we do not want to develop our country until we can borrow in our own country.

In fairness His Majesty's Government must instruct the Government of India that no money should be spent for the development of India unless that money is raised in India. No borrowings should be made here, and we will save you the trouble of having to ask for safeguards for two years or five years or ten years. No borrowings should be made abroad, except with an implicit resolution of the Legislative Assembly. The figures of India's borrowings abroad are of some interest. In 1924 the Sterling debt of India was 324 million pounds. In 1925 it was 341 million pounds. In 1926 it was 342 millions. In 1927 it was 349 million pounds and to-day it is 388 million pounds. That is to say, between 1924 and 1931 the Sterling debt of India has gone up from 324 million pounds to 388 million pounds, an increase of 64 million pounds. The purpose for which this debt was incurred this is neither the place nor the occasion to dilate upon, but this one thing I can say not only on my own responsibility as a person who has a little to do with lending and borrowing but also, speaking on behalf of the Indian commercial community—I am sure I have their backing—I may say in the name of every British-Indian Delegate here that we do not want hereafter to borrow abroad for the development of India unless and until we can be sure that that will not be advanced against us as a bar to our liberty and our freedom in future. We would much rather that our country stayed where it is than borrow somebody's money and later on be told:—"You cannot have your

freedom and your liberty and you cannot be masters in your own house because you have borrowed from me." We have to pay the debt which we have incurred up to now. I was surprised when some of my colleagues here emphasised the necessity of India repaying her debt. No responsible Indian has said that India will not repay her debt. I have never heard anybody saying that. The word " repudiation " has been used lightly, but the meaning of the word " repudiation " has been explained very fully by no less accurate a person than Mahatma Gandhi. There is no question of India not paying her debt. If owing to the " economic blizzard " through which the world is passing the immediate debts of India within the next two, five or ten years, are not met punctually, we may have to renew them. If, owing to the economic condition of a country you find that that country cannot pay up her dues, surely there is no shame in her saying:—Please give me a further short credit, I will repay you. After all, who are responsible for the management of our country's economic condition up to now? His Majesty's Government, and not the people of India. On our records of the Central Legislature you will find repeated protests, most emphatic protests from elected representatives of the people against some of the economic policy which has been forced upon India in the last ten to twelve years. I therefore feel that one of the results of this Conference should be that until His Majesty's Government make up their mind as to what stage of reform India shall have next and the sons of India decide the question of borrowings in their own Legislature, as long as this present form of Government continues, no further sterling debt should be incurred except to meet the existing debt. Let all other borrowing abroad stop. That is what we have come to. We feel it is intolerable, when you confess that India is solvent, that India has not too much debt, that anybody here should say: Because you have our money therefore you shall not have your freedom. I do feel, therefore, that this is the minimum which His Majesty's Government owe to India, namely that no more reasons—or perhaps some would say excuses—should be given for further safeguards, and that further borrowings abroad on behalf of India should be stopped and should not be avoidably incurred.

I feel, Sir, that I have to refer to one small oversight, as I think it to be. I have here the Fourth Report of the Federal Structure Committee, and on page 10 thereof in paragraph 22 I see a reference in the last but one line to paragraph 3, which I presume is only an oversight. It should be paragraph 18 and not paragraph 3. I want to point this out so that the Secretaries may see that an error does not go into the final copy.

Sir, the other point on which I wish to speak is this: I wish to refer to paragraph 23 of the Federal Structure Committee Report under Commercial Discrimination. The financial safeguards and the commercial discrimination questions were both discussed in less than two and a half days, and the Reports had to be disposed of. under the time-table which was laid down for us, within less

than two hours each. I felt so much oppressed by this that I felt it my duty to write to the Lord Chancellor and point out to him that, owing to the fact that one Report reached us at about 8 A.M. and then had to be considered and passed before we rose for lunch the same day, I did not find myself ready to be committed to the Report minus the protests which I had got recorded.

The Lord Chancellor very readily saw my objection and said that my letter would be noted. I may say that he did meet one point which I raised last Saturday regarding the suggestion which was mentioned here. I wish now to refer to paragraph 23; I am reading from the last line on page 10:—

> "It is also plain that where the Governor General or a Provincial Governor is satisfied that proposed legislation, though possibly not on the face of it discriminatory, nevertheless will be discriminatory in fact, he will be called upon in virtue of his special obligations in relation to minorities to consider whether it is not his duty to refuse his assent to the Bill."

Sir, the question of a piece of legislation being not on the face of it discriminatory, but being in fact discriminatory, is a matter which I as a mere layman somewhat fail to understand. As to this sort of phrases, either as to administrative discrimination being referable to the Federal Court, or legislation, which though not on the face of it discriminatory, is in fact discriminatory, these are what I call efforts to overdo the discrimination part and to over-safeguard it. All I can say on behalf of my constituency is that I cannot agree to this, and I want it to be recorded that these safeguards as they are drafted in the Report do not and cannot possibly make for a workable constitution. It may for some make for self-satisfaction that everything is agreed to and the Conference advanced. I myself cannot be a party to any constitution or to any report where things are not put on a basis which will permit the constitution working smoothly, without unnecessary interference and without unnecessary litigation.

In conclusion, I will wind up with this one hope: May Great Britain look at the problem which faces her Prime Minister to-morrow, which we have faced here and which we have come here to help her to solve, in a manner which will reflect credit and glory on all her statesmen of the past, who by their utterances in the House of Commons gave us hope that Great Britain was prepared to lead India on the path of liberty and freedom.

Diwan Bahadur Mudaliyar: Mr. Chairman, early this year when we parted and conceived the idea of a second Round Table Conference to discuss further details, there was not one of us who had taken any serious part in the discussions who did not realise that at that stage there would be difficulties and obstacles much more serious than some of those that met us in the first instance. When we concede that these difficulties, which are inherent in a consideration of details, have been met in a more or less satisfac-

tory manner, as my friends Sir Tej Sapru and Mr. Jayakar pointed out, that the points of contact and of uniformity have been far greater than the points of difference and of impossibility in reaching agreements, I think on the whole we may feel that the work of this second stage of the Conference has not been altogether in vain.

But, having said that, let me quite frankly state that optimists like myself, men who have been led up to the idea of this Round Table Conference, who have enthused over it on the broadcast, on public platforms, in the Legislative Assembly—men like myself are not altogether free from the impression that as much work has not been accomplished as should have been and could have been accomplished.

Now I want to be equally frank and tell you my own analysis of what has led to this imperssion prevailing in my mind. In the first place there is the fact, unfortunate, most regrettable, that the claims of minorities have not been reconciled in the manner in which they ought to have been reconciled. Speaking for myself, for the Party which I have the honour to represent along with my colleague at this Conference, let me state that I go as far as Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru went this morning; that no constitution would be acceptable to us, the Hindu majority in the Madras Presidency, if it did not guarantee the rights of minority communities, and particularly the rights of the untouchable classes in southern India.

It has been our policy during the last eleven years, long before Dr. Ambedkar or my friend Rao Bahadur Srinivasan appeared at this Conference, to speak on their behalf. We have enrolled them as members of our party. We have repeatedly passed resolutions suggesting that for self-governing institutions such as Local Boards and Municipalities, and for the Legislature, they should have special representation, and I for one cannot be a party to a constitution which merely gives to them a certain amount of vague hope that things may be all right, and indeed will be all right, in the future constitution, and that Hindu majorities or other majorities will see to it that the caste-less communities will be adequately represented.

Now, Sir, as I have said I share the regret that this minorities question has not been properly settled, and I venture still to express the hope that, with the efforts of Mahatma Gandhi, when we go back to India we shall be in a position after two or three months to reconsider the whole issue, to come into wider contact with representatives of our various communities, to gather strength from those connections which some of us may miss in this distant place, and to reach a solution; but if unfortunately that should not happen, there is no alternative but to accept the suggestion, which many Delegates favour even at this stage, of a decision by the Government of this vexed question.

Now, as I have said, that was the first difficulty, but there is another difficulty which has queered the pitch of this Conference

to a certain extent, a difficulty which has led to want of progress from time to time. What was the position when we came here? It was at Marseilles that we heard the news that a Natoinal Government had been formed, and we arrived here the week after the National Government had been formed, and I venture to say that at any rate until the first week of November we did not know where we were, and the Government of the day did not know where it was. We had not that impetus, that driving force, that momentum which was given to the Conference on the last occasion by His Majesty's Government. I attach no blame to any quarter and I make no insinuation of any kind. The members of the National Government on the eve of an election had no mind to make up, and had no mind at all on the Indian question. The domestic difficulties and pre-occupations which they had on the one hand, and the fact that on the eve of an election they could not very well come to a decision on the other hand, these two things were responsible in no small measure for the fact that the Federal Structure Committee, in spite of the great help that it received from Lord Reading and in spite of the most sympathetic guidance that it had from its own Chairman, Lord Sankey, could only mark time again and again and could not make any progress.

You were on that Committee, Mr. Chairman, and I am only expressing the opinion that prevailed generally among many people, both of the British Delegation and of the Indian section, when I say that, with the live issues before your electorate, the British Delegation had not the power and had not the opportunity to make that contribution to the success of the deliberations of the Federal Structure Committee which it was in a position to make, in spite of its multiple party representation, at the last stage of this Conference. What happened then? After the National Government had been formed—I do not know whose fault it is, I have not been taken into confidence by any single member of His Majesty's Government and that perhaps is my privilege and my advantage—rumours of various sorts began to get about. There were rumours that Provincial autonomy was the only step that could now be taken, that while the Government were willing to make all possible declarations in ratification of all previous declarations, draftsmen and constitutional experts and practical men had come to the conclusion that development could only be by stages and that Provincial autonomy was the first stage that we should accept.

Let me say at once on behalf of myself and my colleagues here, representing a party which has during the last eleven years successfully and consistently and in a constitutional manner worked the political institutions vouchsafed to us, worked them in the face of misrepresentation and sinister attacks—let me say here and now that it will be impossible for us, a constitutional party, to work a scheme of pure Provincial autonomy divorced from any element of responsibility at the Centre. I said so at the Federal Structure Committee and thanks to the wires having been busy

I received to my surprise cables yesterday morning from the leader of my party, saying that the party was whole-heartedly with me in what I said and pointing out that it is impossible for the party to work through pure Provincial autonomy unless responsibility at the Centre is so coupled with it as to be part and parcel of the constitutional development of my country. The reason is quite simple. We know that with pure Provincial autonomy the agitation in the country will not die down. In fact it will be accelerated, it will be emphasised, it will be aggravated, and I for one, if I were to go back to my Province and get into the Legislature and hold the Office of Minister in charge of Law and Order, dread to think of the consequences of trying to put down an agitation for which I am not responsible, which I cannot control and, I may add, with which I am in legitimate sympathy—an agitation for responsibility at the Centre. That is not because I cannot take risks nor is it because my party has not taken risks in the past.

Speaking in the presence of the leader of the Congress Party, I can say that in 1921 when he started the non-co-operation movement we passed measure after measure to check that movement. We passed Bills which enable us to collect the land revenues, We passed laws in our Madras Legislative Council whereby the non-co-operation movement was checked, and we are prepared to do it again if we are given a fair chance, if we are given that authority and if we can say that we have got a measure of self-government which is not altogether unacceptable to us.

Now, Sir, I was referring to rumours when I was drawn aside to deal with this question of Provincial autonomy which I hope, as Mr. Wedgwood Benn said, has been killed by the speeches made at the Federal Structure Committee. I say, that these rumours got abroad and these rumours made havoc of the faith that many of us had in the future scope of this Conference. It is undeniable that when suggestions of various kinds are made the fertile imagination seizes on one suggestion or another. We are a fecund race, particularly in matters of imagination.

Everyone of us round this table and hundreds in our country could produce constitutions; they have in the past; they are a very studious race. The idea of failure should not get abroad. These theories, these proposals, destroy each other and we shall merely be marking time without making any advance whatsoever. That is the danger which we feel in these suggestions that are being made, I think not from a responsible quarter. Therefore we have most of us come into this Conference with the idea of an all-India Federation, and we want to pursue that idea and none other, we do not want to be side-tracked; we do not want to be drawn away into an examination of other schemes because that will involve more delays and that will lead us nowhere. I am saying this because I want His Majesty's Government to pursue such a policy now. It would be disastrous if, following the advice of some of those newspapers to which reference has been made, this Conference is killed or put

an end to. You dare not do it. We dare not allow you to do it. The last vestige of hope will be gone if this Conference is in any way suddenly ended without having accomplished its purpose. It must go on; it must complete the picture and it must do it as early as possible. The first question which strikes me is the settlement of the communal problem, and if that is not settled within the next two or three months I think that a settlement by the Government is obviously necessary before progress can be made with the constitutional question. I appeal to you to give us a couple of months in order to consider this question and if it is not settled by the end of January to announce a decision and then allow us to go on with the work of this Conference. I was very glad to hear—I hope it will come about—that our very satisfactory and very popular Chairman, Lord Sankey, will visit the country, and I hope that a British Delegation will come with him and that the work of the Federal Structure Committee and other Committees will be carried on. At that stage I want this great impetus behind the constitution built up, the impetus that we shall get from the fact that not merely is His Majesty's Government through the Prime Minister making an announcement, that the statement of January holds good, but the impetus from the consciousness of the fact that the Government is whole-heartedly in sympathy with this idea of an all-India Federation, that it is not going to say that Princes may or may not come in, that it is not going to say anything with regard to other difficulties, but it is the impetus of a consciousness which must go home to everyone of us that the Government is committed and committed deeply to the idea of an all-India Federation and must bring into existence that Federation as early as possible. Why are my fellow-Delegates so nervous of the idea of Provincial autonomy? Why will they not tolerate that idea? Why do they so much insist upon simultaneity in these matters? It is absolutely clear, and they do not want to disguise it for a moment, that distrust is at the bottom of it all. You have to realise it. There is no question that at the present moment your Parliament, constituted as it is, may rest content having passed a Bill for Provincial autonomy, and that your administrators may talk both at Delhi and here, and a thousand difficulties may easily arise and a thousand disinclinations might easily be discussed arising out of the reason why they cannot go further. And therefore if you are tied down to this, that both things must be done simultaneously and you cannot possibly stop where we are now, it follows logically that you are as much interested as we are to see that an all-India Federation comes as early as possible. That really seems to me to be behind this suggestion.

Sir, one word more and I have done at this very late stage. You have a House of Commons constituted with a record majority, and those who are office holders in His Majesty's Government must be feeling fairly comfortable with this huge majority and must be feeling that they can carry on their domestic work, their domestic legislation, their domestic administration, quite smoothly. But let me

tell you this: whether you feel comfortable or whether, as some newspapers say, the very majority is an incumbrance to you, let me say this, that so far as Indian administration is concerned a five hundred majority at Whitehall does not mean a five hundred majority at Delhi or Simla; that you are faced with a very different problem there, and in fact your majority at Whitehall may be the most embarrassing things so far as administration in India is concerned. And, as a member of the Legislative Assembly, as one who has seen how fast the prestige of the present Government at the Centre is being lost, how impossible it is for your Finance Member at Delhi to rise to an emergency, which your Chancellor of the Exchequer here has been able to do? I say it will not be possible for you to delay this idea of responsibility at the Centre. It is therefore up to you to see that the responsibility at the Centre and Provincial autonomy are coupled together and that the people are guaranteed that both are coming as part and parcel of the same Indian constitution.

Sir, I feel there is not much point in speaking at a time when your Cabinet has probably finished with discussion and the statement of the Premier has been corrected and re-corrected. Well, I have ventured to say that because I thought at least as far as the future proceedings are concerned you might take note of our suspicions and try to allay them.

Sir Ghulam Hussain Hidayatullah: My Lord, I must make it at the outset very clear that I am giving expression to my personal views. Last year we all blessed the Federal form of government as the most suitable form of government for the vast continent of India. Responsibility at the Centre, safeguards for the transition period. In the last two days I have been hearing some of our friends who say because the framing of the Federal constitution will take some time, we ought to start with Provincial autonomy at once. I am acquainted with the feelings in the Bombay Presidency, which is a stronghold of Mahatmaji. I should be failing in my duty if I did not enlighten you all that in the Presidency of Bombay Provincial autonomy without responsibility at the Centre will not work. Before I came I knew the feelings of the people; they had already misgivings in their minds.

My friends will tell you, Sir, that every now and then they expressed a view that the British Government did not mean business, and that they would not give any more than Provincial autonomy, and now, if we start with Provincial autonomy, I am afraid we shall confirm their fears.

But let us suppose, Sir, that we do start with Provincial autonomy as a beginning. You have heard the Liberals. They say they will not work it. I am sure the Congressmen will not work it. The only faithful amongst the faithless is my friend the leader of the non-Brahmins, and he has also signed a letter to the Prime Minister that he wants Provincial autonomy and responsibility at the Centre simultaneously. Then, Sir, who remains to work it? My friend Dr. Ambedkar and myself.

I must remind you, Sir, that I have worked the Reforms for a large number of years, from the beginning. Why did dyarchy fail? One of the causes of the failure of dyarchy was finance. The Ministers had not enough funds to do much work in the nation-building departments. We know now that every government in India or anywhere else is faced with financial stringency, and if we start Provincial autonomy to-day I am afraid it will be wrecked on the rock of finance.

Then, Sir, there was another suggestion by one of my leaders, that the country is getting restive and that the people want to be masters in their own houses as early as possible, and therefore we ought to have responsibility in British India only. I have considered that question as one of the ways of getting out of the difficulty, but if we adopt that position the result will be that we shall be going back on our decisions of last year, and we have to consider the question of my friends the Princes. They agreed to responsibility at the Centre on the clear understanding that they will have a federal form of government. Now, if we start by introducing responsibility in British India only, I am afraid we shall be damping the enthusiasm of those Princes who have very kindly come to our relief and removed one of the greatest difficulties in the way of India being united, and we shall be helping those who are not very anxious to have federation.

Suppose, Sir, we start with responsibility at the Centre, the Princes may say we do not want federation. Are we going to have two parallel governments in India, a British-Indian Government and an Indian States Government? That might again lead to further complications. As I understand it, the British Government is bound by treaties to protect the Indian States from any sort of aggression. Are we going to have two armies in India, the British-Indian army and another army to protect the Indian States? I am sorry I cannot agree with my leader who has made this suggestion.

Now, Sir, after all we are told that the framing of the Federal Constitution will take a few years. What are a few years in the history of a nation? I think, Sir, that if the Federal Structure Committee were to continue its good work it would not take more than a few years to have a full-fledged federal constitution.

But, Sir, whether we have a federal form of government or any other form—though I like the federal form because it is the only possible form—unless all the communities work it with goodwill and co-operation it will not be a success. I therefore beseech Mahatmaji, in the interests of the country, to come to our help and help to solve the communal question. Otherwise I would remind you, Mahatmaji, that you were taught civil disobedience by a Muhammadan. My esteemed friend, the Nightingale of India always tells us that non-co-operation was first practised by a grandson of our Prophet, Hassan. That is already in our heads, but if anybody stands in the way of our claims we shall be compelled to resort to your methods. Therefore, you have come to the help of our country.

Now having said so much, Sir, I might say a few words about the Princes having entered the federation on their own terms. I must say they have got a price for their entry. I do not mind that, but our proposed constitution because of their entry has become anomalous. In the proposed constitution we are combining democracy with autocracy because they stand for their pound of flesh. They want their representatives to be returned by nomination and the representatives of British India will be returned by election. I do not mind that either. In spite of all the difficulties I welcome their entry for two reasons. One is that they have for the first time in their lives accepted the principle of democracy and the second is that they will make India a self-governing India and a united India.

Having said so much I cannot leave my part of the country, Sind. I must say a word about that. Last year the sub-Committee on Sind made a recommendation—I need not quote the words, because it is known to all of you—that an Expert Committee be appointed to investigate the question of finance, and the Government of India I must say, has given effect to that recommendation. An Expert Committee was appointed. That Committee's Report has been published, and it has shown that Sind is a deficit Province. A further recommendation of the same Committee was that if the Expert Committee found that Sind is a deficit Province then the representatives of Sind should be given a chance of finding ways and means of meeting that deficit. I beseech you, My Lord, that you will implement the remaining portion of the Resolution. I do not, and most of us do not, agree with the conclusions of that Committee, but I shall not at this late hour criticise the conclusions because I think it is not an opportune time. With that I will conclude my remarks.

(The Conference adjourned at 11-50 p.m., and resumed at 12-5 a.m., when the Prime Minister took the Chair.)

Mr. Gandhi: Prime Minister and Friends, I wish that I could have done without having to speak to you but I felt that I would not have been just to you or just to my principles if I did not put in what may be the last word on behalf of the Congress. I live under no illusion. I do not think that anything that I can say this evening can possibly influence the decision of the Cabinet. Probably the decision has been already taken. Matters of the liberty of practically a whole Continent can hardly be decided by mere argumentation, even negotiation. Negotiation has its purpose and has its play, but only under certain conditions. Without those conditions negotiations are a fruitless task. But I do not want to go into all these matters. I want as far as possible to confine myself within the four corners of the conditions that you, Prime Minister, read to this Conference at its opening meeting. I would, therefore, first of all say a few words in connection with the Reports that have been submitted to this Conference. You will find in these Reports that generally it has been stated that so and so

is the opinion of a large majority, some, however, have expressed an opinion to the contrary, and so on. Parties who have dissented have not been stated. I had heard when I was in India, and I was told when I came here, that no decision or no decisions will be taken by the ordinary rule of majority, and I do not want to mention this fact here by way of complaint that the Reports have been so framed as if the proceedings were governed by the test of majority. But it was necessary for me to mention this fact, because to most of these reports you will find that there is a dissenting opinion, and in most of the cases that dissent unfortunately happens to belong to me. It was not a matter of joy to have to dissent from fellow-delegates, but I felt that I could not truly represent the Congress unless I notified that dissent.

There is another thing which I want to bring to the notice of this Conference, namely: what is the meaning of the dissent of the Congress? I said at one of the preliminary meetings of the Federal Structure Committee that the Congress claimed to represent over 85 per cent. of the population of India, that is to say the dumb, toiling, semi-starved millions. But I went further: that the Congress claimed also by right of service to represent even the Princes, if they would pardon my putting forth that claim, and the landed gentry, the educated class. I wish to repeat that claim and I wish this evening to emphasise that claim.

All the other parties at this meeting represent sectional interests. Congress alone claims to represent the whole of India, all interests. It is no communal organisation; it is a determined enemy of communalism in any shape or form. Congress knows no distinction of race, colour or creed; its platform is universal. It may not always have lived up to the creed. I do not know a single human organisation that lives up to its creed. Congress has failed very often to my knowledge. It may have failed more often to the knowledge of its critics. But the worst critic will have to recognise, as it has been recognised, that the National Congress of India is a daily-growing organisation, that its message penetrates the remotest village of India; that on given occasions the Congress has been able to demonstrate its influence over and among these masses who inhabits 700,000 villages.

And yet here I see that the Congress is treated as one of the Parties. I do not mind it; I do not regard it as a calamity for the Congress; but I do regard it as a calamity for the purpose of doing the work for which we have gathered together here. I wish I could convince all the British public men, the British Ministers, that the Congress is capable of delivering the goods. The Congress is the only all-India-wide national organisation, bereft of any communal basis; that it does represent all the minorities which have lodged their claim here and which, or the signatories on their behalf, claim—I hold unjustifiably—to represent 46 per cent. of the population of India. The Congress, I say, claims to represent all these minorities.

What a great difference it would be to-day if his claim on behalf of the Congress was recognised. I feel that I have to state this claim with some degree of emphasis on behalf of peace, for the sake of achieving the purpose which is common to all of us, to you Englishmen who sit at this table, and to us the Indian men and women who also sit at this table. I say so for this reason. Congress is a powerful organisation; Congress is an organisation which has been accused of running or desiring to run a parallel Government; and in a way I have endorsed the charge. If you could understand the working of the Congress, you would welcome an organisation which could run a parallel Government and show that it is possible for an organisation, voluntary, without any force at its command, to run the machinery of Government even under adverse circumstances. But no. Although you have invited the Congress, you distrust the Congress. Although you have invited the Congress, you reject its claim to represent the whole of India. Of course it is possible at this end of the world to dispute that claim, and it is not possible for me to prove this claim; but, all the same, if you find me asserting that claim, I do so because a tremendous responsibility rests upon my shoulders.

The Congress represents the spirit of rebellion. I know that the word "rebellion" must not be whispered at a Conference which has been summoned in order to arrive at an agreed solution of India's troubles through negotiation. Speaker after speaker has got up and said that India should achieve her liberty through negotiation, by argument, and that it will be the greatest glory of Great Britain if Great Britain yields to India's demands by argument. But the Congress does not hold that view, quite. The Congress has an alternative which is unpleasant to you.

I heard several speakers—and let me say I have endeavoured not to miss a *single* sitting; I have tried to follow every speaker with the utmost attention and with all the respect that I could possibly give to these speakers—saying what a dire calamity it would be if India was fired with the spirit of lawlessness, rebellion, terrorism and so on. I do not pretend to have read history, but as a school-boy I had to pass a paper in history also, and I read that the page of history is soiled red with the blood of those who have fought for freedom. I do not know an instance in which nations have attained their own without having to go through an incredible measure of travail. The dagger of the assassin, the poison bowl, the bullet of the rifleman, the spear and all these weapons and methods of destruction have been up to now used by what I consider blind lovers of liberty and freedom, and the historian has not condemned him. I hold no brief for the terrorists. Mr. Ghuznavi brought in the terrorists and he brought in the Calcutta Corporation. I felt hurt when he mentioned an incident that took place at the Calcutta Corporation. He forgot to mention that the Mayor of that Corporation made handsome reparation for the error into which he himself was betrayed and the error into which the Calcutta Corporation was betrayed through the instrumentality of those members of

the Corporation who were Congressmen. I hold no brief for Congressmen who directly or indirectly would encourage terrorism. As sooon as this incident was brought to the notice of the Congress the Congress set about putting it in order. It immediately called upon the Mayor of the Calcutta Corporation to give an account of what was done and the Mayor, the gentleman that he is, immediately admitted his mistake and made all the reparation that it was then legally possible to make. I must not detain this Assembly over this incident for any length of time. He mentioned also a verse which the children of the forty schools conducted by the Calcutta Corporation are supposed to have recited. There were many other mis-statements in that speech which I could dwell upon, but I have no desire to do so. It is only out of regard for the great Calcutta Corporation and out of regard for truth and on behalf of those who are not here to-night to put in their defence that I mention these two glaring instances. I do not for one moment believe that this was taught in the Calcutta Corporation schools with the knowledge of the Calcutta Corporation. I do know that in those terrible days of last year several things were done for which we have regret, for which we have made reparation. If our boys in Calcutta were taught these verses which Mr. Ghuznavi has recited I am here to tender an apology on their behalf, but I should want it proved that the boys were taught by the schoolmasters of these schools with the knowledge and encouragement of the Corporation.

Charges of this nature have been brought against the Congress times without number, and times without number these charges have also been refuted, but I have mentioned these things at this juncture. It is again to show that for the sake of liberty people have fought, people have lost their lives, people have killed and have sought death at the hands of those whom they have sought to oust. The Congress then comes upon the scene and devises a new method not known to history, namely, that of civil disobedience, and the Congress has been following that method up. But again I am up against a stone wall and I am told that that is a method that no government in the world will tolerate. Well, of course the governments may not tolerate, no government has tolerated open rebellion. No government may tolerate civil disobedience, but governments have to succumb even to these forces, as the British Government has done before now, even as the great Dutch Government after eight years of trial had to yield to the logic of facts. General Smuts is a brave General, a great Statesman, and a very hard taskmaster also, but he himself recoiled with horror from even the contemplation of doing to death innocent men and women who were merely fighting for the preservation of their self-respect, and the things which he had vowed he would never yield in the year 1908, reinforced as he was by General Botha, he had to do in the year 1914, after having tried these civil resisters through and through. And in India Lord Chelmsford had to do the same thing; the Governor of Bombay had to do the same thing in Borsad and Bardoli. I suggest to you, Prime Minister, it is too late to-day to resist this, and it is this thing which weighs me down, this choice

that lies before them, the parting of the ways probably. I shall hope against hope, I shall strain every nerve to achieve an honourable settlement for my country if I can do so without having to put the millions of my countrymen and countrywomen and even children through this ordeal of fire. It can be a matter of no joy and comfort to me to lead them on again to a fight of that character, but if a further ordeal of fire has to be our lot I shall approach that with the greatest joy and with the greatest consolation that I was doing what I felt to be right, the country was doing what it felt to be right, and the country will have the additional satisfaction of knowing that it was not at least taking lives, it was giving lives; it was not making the British people directly suffer, it was suffering. Professor Gilbert Murray told me—I shall never forget that—I am paraphrasing his inimitable language. He said: you do not consider for one moment that we Englishmen do not suffer when thousands of your countrymen suffer, that we are so heartless? I do not think so. I do know that you will suffer; but I want you to suffer because I want to touch your hearts; and when your hearts have been touched will come the psychological moment for negotiation. Negotiation there always will be; and if this time I have travelled all these miles in order to enter upon negotiation, I thought that your countryman Lord Irwin had sufficiently tried us through his ordinances, that he had sufficient evidence that thousands of men and women of India and that thousands of children had suffered; and that, ordinance or no ordinance, *lathis* or no *lathis*, nothing would avail to stem the tide that was onrushing and to stem the passions that were rising in the breasts of the men and women of India who were thirsting for liberty.

Whilst there is yet a little sand left in the glass, I want you to understand what this Congress stands for. My life is at your disposal. The lives of all the members of the Working Committee, the all-India Congress Committee, are at your disposal. But remember that you have at your disposal the lives of all these dumb millions. I do not want to sacrifice those lives if I can possibly help it. Therefore please remember that I will count no sacrifice too great if by chance I can pull through an honourable settlement. You will find me always having the greatest spirit of compromise if I can but fire you with the spirit that is working in the Congress, namely, that India must have real liberty. Call it by any name you like: a rose will smell as sweet by any other name, but it must be the rose of liberty that I want and not the artificial product. If your mind and the Congress mind, the mind of this Conference and the mind of the British people, means the same thing by the same word, then you will find the amplest room for compromise, and will find the congress itself always in a compromising spirit. But so long as there is not that one mind, that one definition, not one implication for the same word that you and I and we may be using, so long there is no compromise possible. How can there be any compromise so long as we each one of us has a different definition for the same words that we may be using. It is impossible, Prime Minister. I want to suggest to you in all humility that it is utterly

impossible then to find a meeting ground, to find a ground where you can apply the spirits of compromise. And I am very grieved to have to say that up to now I have not been able to discover a common definition for the terms that we have been exchanging during all these weary weeks.

I was shown last week the Statute of Westminster by a sceptic, and he said: " Have you seen the definition of ' Dominion ' "? I read the definition of " Dominion," and naturally I was not at all perplexed or shocked to see that the word " Dominion " was exhaustively defined, and it had not a general definition but a particular definition. It simply said: the word " Dominion " shall include Australia, South Africa, Canada and so on, ending with the Irish Free State. I do not think I noticed Egypt there. Then he said: " Do you see what your Dominion means? " It did not make any impression upon me. I do not mind what my Dominion means or what complete independence means. In a way I was relieved. I said I am now relieved from having to quarrel about the word " Dominion," because I am out of it. But I want complete independence, and even so, so many Englishmen have said: " Yes, you can have complete independence, but what is the meaning of complete independence? " and again we come to different definitions. Therefore, I say the Congress claim is registered as complete independence.

One of your great statesmen—I do not think I should give his name—was debating with me, and he said: " Honestly, I did not know that you meant this by complete independence." He ought to have known, but he did not know, and I shall tell you what he did not know. When I said to him, " I cannot be a partner in an Empire," he said. " Of course, that is logical." I said, " But I want to become that. It is not as if I shall be if I am compelled to, but I want to become a partner with Great Britain. I want to become a partner with the English people; but I want to enjoy precisely the same liberty that your people enjoy, and I want to seek this partnership not merely for the benefit of India, and not merely for mutual benefit; I want to seek this partnership in order that the great weight that is crushing the world to atoms may be lifted from its shoulders."

This took place ten or twelve days ago. Strange as it may appear, I got a note from another Englishman whom also you know and whom also you respect. Among many things; he writes: " I believe profoundly that the peace and happiness of mankind depend on our friendship," and, as if I would not understand that, he says " your people and mine." I must read to you what he also says, " And of all Indians you are the one that the real Englishman likes and understands."

He does not waste any words on flattery, and I do not think he has intended this last expression to flatter me. It will not flatter me in the slightest degree. There are many things in this note which, if I could share them with you, would perhaps make you understand better the significance of this expression, but let me tell

you that when he writes this last sentence he does not mean me personally. I personally signify nothing, and I know I would mean nothing to any single Englishman; but I mean something to some Englishmen because I represent a cause, because I seek to represent a nation, a great organisation which has made itself felt. That is the reason why he says this.

But then, if I could possibly find that working basis, Prime Minister, there is ample room for compromise. It is friendship I crave. My business is not to throw overboard the slave-holder and tyrant. My philosophy forbids me to do so, and to-day the Congress has accepted that philosophy not as a creed, as it is to me, but as a policy, because the Congress believes that it is the right and best thing for India, a nation of three hundred and fifty millions, to do. A nation of 350 million people does not need the dagger of the assassin, it does not need the poison bowl, it does not need the sword, the spear or the bullet. It needs simply a will of its own, an ability to say " No," and that nation is to-day learning to say " No."

But what is it that that nation does? Summarily, or at all to dismiss Englishmen? No. Its mission is to-day to convert Englishmen. I do not want to break the bond between England and India, but I do want to transform that bond. I want to transform that slavery into complete freedom for my country. Call it complete independence or whatever you like, I will not quarrel about that word, and even though my countrymen may dispute with me for having taken some other word I shall be able to bear down that opposition so long as the content of the word that you may suggest to me bears the same meaning. Hence I have times without number to urge upon your attention that the safeguards that have been suggested are completely unsatisfactory. They are not in the interests of India.

Three experts from the Federation of Commerce and Industry have in their own manner, each in his different manner, told you out of their expert experience how utterly impossible it is for any body of responsible Ministers to tackle the problem of administration when 80 per cent. of India's resources are mortgaged irretrievably. Better than I could have shown to you they have shown, out of the amplitude of their knowledge, what these financial safeguards mean for India. They mean the complete cramping of India. They have discussed at this table financial safeguards, but that includes necessarily the question of Defence and the question of the Army. Yet while I say that the safeguards are unsatisfactory as they have been presented, I have not hesitated to say, and I do not hesitate to repeat, that the Congress is pledged to giving safeguards, endorsing safeguards which may be demonstrated to be in the interests of India.

At one of the sittings of the Federal Structure Committee I had no hesitation in amplifying the admission and saying that these safeguards must be also of benefit to Great Britain. I do not want safeguards which are merely beneficial to India and prejudicial to the real interests of Great Britain. The fancied interests of India

will have to be sacrificed. The fancied interests of Great Britain will have to be sacrificed. The illegitimate interests of India will have to be sacrificed. The illegitimate interests of Great Britain will also have to be sacrificed. Therefore, again I repeat, if we have the same meaning for the same word I will agree with Mr. Jayakar, with Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and other distinguished speakers who have spoken at this Conference. I will agree with them all, that we have after all, after all these labours, reached a substantial measure of agreement, but my despair, my grief, is that I do not read the same words in the same light. The implications of the safeguards of Mr. Jayakar, I very much fear, are different from my implications, and the implications of Mr. Jayakar and myself are perhaps only different from the implications that Sir Samuel Hoare, for instance, has in mind; I do not know. We have never really come to grips. We have never come to brass tacks as you put it, and I am anxious—I have been pining to come to real grips and to brass tacks all these days and all these nights, and I have felt: Why are we not coming nearer and nearer together, and why are we wasting our time in eloquence, in oratory, in debating, and in scoring points? Heaven knows, I have no desire to hear my own voice. Heaven knows I have no desire to take part in any debating. I know that liberty is made of sterner stuff, and I know that the freedom of India is made of much sterner stuff. We have problems that would baffle any statesman. We have problems that other nations have not to tackle. But they do not baffle me; they cannot baffle those who have been brought up in the Indian climate. Those problems are there with us. Just as we have to tackle our bubonic plague, we have to tackle the problem of malaria. We have to tackle, as you have not, the problem of snakes and scorpions, monkeys, tigers and lions. We have to tackle these problems because we have been brought up under them. They do not baffle us. Somehow or other we have survived the ravages of these venomous reptiles and various creatures. So also shall we survive our problem and find a way out of these problems. But to-day you and we have come together at a Round Table and we want to find a common formula which will work. Please believe me that whilst I abate not a title of the claim that I have registered on behalf of the Congress, which I do not propose to repeat here, while I withdraw not one word of the speeches that I had to make at the Federal Structure Committee, I am here to compromise; I am here to consider every formula that British ingenuity can prepare, every formula that the ingenuity of such constitutionalists as Mr. Sastri, Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, Mr. Jayakar, Mr. Jinnah, Sir Muhammad Shafi, and a host of other constitutionalists can weave into being.

I will not be baffled. I shall be here as long as I am required because I do not want to revive civil disobedience. I want to turn the truce that was arrived at, at Delhi, into a permanent settlement. But for heaven's sake give me, a frail man, 62 years gone, a little bit of a chance. Find a little corner for him and the organisation that he represents. You distrust that organisation though you may

seemingly trust me. Do not for one moment differentiate me from the organisation of which I am but a drop in the ocean. I am no greater than the organisation to which I belong. I am infinitely smaller than that organisation; and if you find me a place, if you trust me, I invite you to trust the Congress also. Your trust in me otherwise is a broken reed. I have no authority save what I derived from the Congress. If you will work the Congress for all it is worth, then you will say good-bye to terrorism; then you will not need terrorism. To-day you have to fight the school of terrorists which is there with your disciplined and organised terrorism, because you will be blind to the facts or the writing on the wall. Will you not see the writing that these terrorists are writing with their blood? Will you not see that we do not want bread made of wheat, but we want bread of liberty; and without that liberty there are thousands to-day who are sworn not to give themselves peace or to give the country peace.

I urge you then to read that writing on the wall. I ask you not to try the patience of a people known to be proverbially patient. We speak of the mild Hindu, and the Mussulman also by contact, good or evil, with the Hindu, has himself become mild. And that mention of the Mussulman brings me to the baffling problem of minorities. Believe me, that problem exists here, and I repeat what I used to say in India—I have not forgotten those words—that without the problem of minorities being solved there is no Swaraj for India, there is no freedom for India. I know that; I realise it; and yet I came here in the hope, perchance, that I might be able to pull through a solution here. But I do not despair of some day or other finding a real and living solution in connection with the minorities problem. I repeat what I have said elsewhere, that so long as the wedge in the shape of foreign rule divides community from community and class from class, there will be no real living solution, there will be no living friendship between these communities. It will be after all and at best a paper solution. But immediately you withdraw that wedge, the domestic ties, the domestic affections, the knowledge of common birth—do you suppose that all these will count for nothing?

Were Hindus and Mussulmans and Sikhs always at war with one another when there was no British rule, when there was no English face seen there? We have chapter and verse given to us by Hindu historians and by Mussulman historians to say that we were living in comparative peace even then. And Hindus and Mussulmans in the villages are not even to-day quarrelling. In those days they were not known to quarrel at all. The late Maulana Muhammad Ali often used to tell me, and he was himself a bit of an historian, he said, "If God "—"Allah," as he called God—"gives me life, I propose to write the history of Mussalman rule in India; and then I will show through documents that British people have erred, that Aurengzeb was not so vile as he has been painted by the British historian; that the Mogul rule was not so bad as it has been shown to us in British history"; and so on. And so have Hindu historians

written. This quarrel is not old; this quarrel is coeval with this acute shame. I dare to say it is coeval with the British advent, and immediately this relationship, the unfortunate, artificial, unnatural relationship between Great Britain and India is transformed into a natural relationship, when it becomes, if it does become, a voluntary partnership to be given up, to be dissolved at the will of either party, when it becomes that you will find that Hindus, Mussulmans, Sikhs, Europeans, Anglo-Indians, Christians, Untouchables, will all live together as one man.

I want to say one word about the Princes, and I shall have done. I have not said much about the Princes, nor do I intend to say much tonight about the Princes, but I should be wronging them, and I should be wronging the Congress if I did not register my claim, not with the Round Table Conference, but with the Princes. It is open to the Princes to give their terms on which they will join the Federation. I have appealed to them to make the path easy for those who inhabit the other part of India, and therefore I can only make these suggestions for their favourable consideration, for their earnest consideration. I think that if they accepted, no matter what they are, but some fundamental rights as the common property of all India, and if they accepted that position and allowed those rights to be tested by the Court, which will be again of their own creation, and if they introduced elements—only elements—of representation on behalf of their subjects, I think that they would have gone a long way to conciliate their subjects. They would have gone a long way to show to the world and to show to the whole of India that they are also fired with a democratic spirit, that they do not want to remain undiluted autocrats, but that they want to become constitutional monarchs even as King George of Great Britain is.

Sir, a note has been placed in my hands by my friend, Sir Abdul Qaiyum, and he says, will not I say one word about the Frontier Province? I will, and it is this. Let India get what she is entitled to and what she can really take, but whatever she gets, whenever she gets it, let the Frontier Province get complete autonomy to-day. That Frontier will then be a standing demonstration to the whole of India, and therefore the whole vote of the Congress will be given in favour of the Frontier Province getting Provincial autonomy to-morrow. Prime Minister, if you can possibly get your Cabinet to endorse the proposition that from to-morrow the Frontier Province becomes a full fledged autonomous Province I shall then have a proper footing amongst the Frontier tribes and convene them to my assistance when those over the border cast an evil eye on India.

Last of all, my last is a pleasant task for me. This is, perhaps, the last time that I shall be sitting with you at negotiations. It is not that I want that. I want to sit at the same table with you in your closets and to negotiate and to plead with you and to go down on bended knee before I take the final leap and final plunge. But whether I have the good fortune to continue to tender my co-opera-

tion or not does not depend upon me. It largely depends upon you. But it may not even depend upon you. It depends upon so many circumstances over which neither you nor we may have any control whatsoever. Then let me perform this pleasant task of giving my thanks to all from Their Majesties down to the poorest men in the East End, where I have taken up my habitation.

In that settlement which represents the poor people of the East End of London I have become one of them. They have accepted me as a member, and as a favoured member of their family. It will be one of the richest treasures that I shall carry with me. Here, too, I have found nothing but courtesy and nothing but a genuine affection from all with whom I have come in touch. I have come in touch with so many Englishmen. It has been a priceless privilege to me. They have listened to what must have often appeared to them to be unpleasant, although it was true. Although I have often been obliged to say these things to them they have never shown the slightest impatience or irritation. It is impossible for me to forget these things. No matter what befalls me, no matter what the fortunes may be of this Round Table Conference, one thing I shall certainly carry with me—that is, that from high to low I have found nothing but the utmost courtesy and the utmost affection. I consider that it was well worth my paying this visit to England in order to find this human affection. It has enhanced, it has deepened my irrepressible faith in human nature that although Englishmen and Englishwomen have been fed upon lies so often that I see disfiguring your Press, that although in Lancashire the Lancashire people had perhaps some reason for becoming irritated against me, I found no irritation and no resentment even in the operatives. The operatives, men and women, hugged me. They treated me as one of their own. I shall never forget that.

I am carrying with me thousands upon thousands of English friendships. I do not know them, but I read that affection in their eyes as early in the morning I walk through your streets. All this hospitality, all this kindness will never be effaced from my memory no matter what befalls my unhappy land. I thank you for your forbearance.

Pandit M. M. Malaviya: Mr. Prime Minister, now that the labours of this Conference are coming to an end I wish to put in a few observations to show how it appears to me that we have proceeded with our work and the results that we have achieved.

I feel, Sir, that the problem of India has not been thoroughly understood here. I feel that there is not the atmosphere in which there could be a recognition of the true condition of the people of India and of the justice of what India demands. We have discussed various questions at the Conference; we have arrived at some understandings, which are very valuable; but all things said and considered, I find that the position is one which cannot fill us with any hope for the future.

We have come here and we have been treated with great kindness and courtesy; we are all deeply grateful for it. But I have

felt, Mr. Prime Minister, that there are very few Englishmen who have made up their minds to consider the Indian problem as they would consider the problem if it was another people—a white people —whom they were dealing with. There is a feeling that India was asking for something for which it was not prepared. There is a feeling that those of us, like Mahatma Gandhi and others, who press for the Congress point of view, are asking for what they are not at present entitled to. There is a feeling that a favour is being conferred upon us Indians in giving us the opportunity to express our views before this Conference, and through this Conference, before the British public. It oppresses me to think that it is so. Until, Mr. Prime Minister, our English fellow-subjects come to the conclusion and make up their mind that they will deal with us as equal fellow subjects, until they are prepared to sit down to consider what our difficulties are and to solve those difficulties fairly, the solution of this problem will not have been advanced very much. I am very grateful that last year you decided, with the consent of His Majesty's Government, to make the announcement that you did, that there would be an all-India Federation established, that there would be responsibility introduced in the Centre of the Government of India, and that there would be certain transitory safeguards provided. We were led to think that those decisions were final; and yet after we came here we found that, owing to a change of Government, the decisions almost seemed to run the risk of being given up, of being practically abandoned.

I am very grateful that that catastrophe was averted, but I cannot forget the incident that, merely owing to a change of Government, and merely owing to a change in an important office, the whole decision of last year seemed to be in peril of being altered. I am very glad, sir, that you take exception to my statement. I hope I am wrong; but what compels me to say it is that for days together we had to work against the possibility of such a decision being arrived at. What I feel is that unless the House of Commons, unless the British public, unless British statesmen have made up their minds definitely that a fully responsible Government shall be established in India, unless that decision is placed beyond any dispute or cavil, unless it is placed beyond the possibility of being affected by any change in office or elsewhere, India cannot expect that a new era is shortly to dawn upon her.

Mr. Prime Minister, I want my English fellow-subjects to think what it means to India. what decision in this matter and delay in this matter means to India. India is not asking for a change merely for the fun of it. India feels the intolerable degredation of being under a foreign yoke such as the British bureaucratic system which at present exists in India. India desires freedom for her own sons such as you enjoy in your country. India has been longing for this freedom.

For four thousand years our ancestors ruled in our country. Long, long before any Englishman set his foot there our ancestors had a system of Government which your own historians have

admired. For only 150 years there has been British rule in India, and we do not like anybody to tell us that we have lost the capacity for self-government. One-third of India even to-day is ruled by Indians; and, having a personal knowledge of most of the States, I can say that the condition of the people generally in the Indian States will compare favourably with the condition of the people in British India, all things taken together. Now, for such a people it is a matter of sore trial that they should continue to be under foreign rule, and the people have been working for a long time as you, Mr. Prime Minister, very well know, to obtain self-government. The Congress began its labours in 1885. From that time onwards it has repeatedly urged the introduction of full self-government. But let me remind you that the movement reached its height in India last year when from 70,000 to 75,000 persons, men, women, and some children too, went to jail and exposed themselves to all the hardships of that situation in order that India might be free.

What are we going to tell them when we return to India? Are we going to tell them simply that we have delivered speeches, and that they have been recorded and will be published? Are we to tell them that the matter is still being considered, that the House of Commons is not yet friendly to the change that we desire? Are we going to tell them that a section of the British Press is insulting us by its remarks and telling us that we cannot have what we have asked for? Or are we going to tell them that the British people have made up their minds, that they will not stand any longer in the way of the people of our ancient land, India; that the people of Britain will not stand any longer in the way of our exercising that right of self-government which God has meant every people to exercise?

This is what I wish that we should be able to say to them; but what is the position? We have discussed several questions. We have been told we have not settled certain questions and that until those questions are settled the Government cannot arrive at definite conclusions. I beg to point out that that is not the way in which you settled the matter with the Irish people. When you decided to settle the question with Ireland you entered into an agreement. A few of your representatives and a few representatives of the Irish people sat down, drew up an agreement, noted down the vital points, and then decided that a Statute should follow later. Is it not possible for you, is it not possible for us, to sit down and draw up an agreement like that?

We have been told that failure to decide the communal question stands in the way. Did it stand in the way of a settlement with the Irish people? Had not they to deal with minorities? Did not you in that agreement—I think it was of the 6th February, 1921—lay down certain safeguards which were not finally decided upon but which were mentioned there as matters to be decided later? These included safeguards for the protection of the minorities also.

Here all that my Mussulman friends and my other friends who represent the minorities ask is not that there shall be no new con-

stitution set up, but that reasonable provision shall be made for the protection of the rights of minorities in the new constitution. Could not an agreement like that be arrived at here. You have very kindly invited us to this Conference. This is the second time you have invited us Indians to this Conference and you have spent much time and labour on it. No one has worked harder or more assiduously than Lord Sankey, to whom we are all very grateful for the trouble he has taken in dealing with these questions. We are thankful for all the labour and time you have spent, but what is the sum total of what we have arrived at? What is the sum total that we have achieved? I submit even now what is needed is that you and your friends and the English Parliament should definitely make up your minds that responsible government shall be established in India and established in the shortest possible time.

Mr. Gandhi exercises a most tremendous influence on the people of India, but I regret to say that even his influence will not be sufficient to satisfy the cravings of the people of India for freedom. They will not be satisfied to hear merely that a declaration has been made which assures us of the establishment of responsibility at the Centre at some future date. People did not suffer merely to obtain such a declaration. I have mentioned the case of Ireland. It may be said that in that case there was a war, and that an agreement was arrived at at the end of a war. I hope, Mr. Prime Minister, you at least will not say so, because I am certain the method of war cannot compare with the method of non-violent civil disobedience or passive resistance which Mr. Gandhi has inculcated on the people of India. It avoids bloodshed; it avoids violence; it avoids doing any wrong to any fellow-man. It teaches the people to suffer wrong, to suffer injustice, to suffer pain and to suffer loss. But that method does not involve less heavy sacrifice than the method of violence and war, and I submit we should begin a new era in the history of mankind by arriving by argument, and reason, by friendly discussion and good-will at a solution of even such a great problem as the transfer of power from the hands of the British people into the hands of the people in whose hands God meant that that power should rest.

I ask you, Prime Minister, to consider whether it is still not possible to deal with this matter in the way I have suggested. Let me remind you, Sir, that the condition of the people of India is such that they cannot with equanimity hear of a decision which does not tell them that responsible government is going to be established without any avoidable delay. The condition of the people has been going from bad to worse. I do not wish to enter into controversial questions at this late hour, but it is my duty to remind you that the condition of the people generally in India has been going from bad to worse, that the agriculturist is in a sad plight, that he has been hard hit by the legislation which put the rupee at 1*s.* 6*d.*, that he has been hard hit by all the other circumstances which have come about during the last two years, that the general

mass of the people are very very poor and are undergoing much suffering. We should have the chance to serve them and to bring them some relief. British administration has lasted in India now for over 150 years, but unfortunately British administration, while it has built roads and railways and public offices, and schools and hospitals to some extent, has failed to build up the strength of the people. The people are not half as strong economically to-day as they should be, and we cannot get them out of this miserable condition unless we have the power in our hands to administer our own affairs.

Ever since it came into existence the Congress has been urging —as you, Prime Minister, will remember—that expenditure should be largely reduced in India. It has been asking that the expenditure on the Civil Services should be reduced and that the expenditure on the Army should be reduced. The questions we have been discussing have not enabled us to come to a final conclusion on any of those matters. If the Army is not to be touched, unless there is an agreement that the expenditure on the Army should be brought to at least one half of what it is to-day, as Mr. Birla urged, unless it is agreed that it is essential that the Army expenditure should be brought to about 30 crores, unless it is agreed that we should have full power, as any other free government would have, to reorganise our whole budget of expenditure, that we should have the same power as any free government has to consider what economies should be introduced—unless we have all this power, what is the use of talking of responsible government or any shadow of it?

These are the questions which call for determination. These are the questions which should be settled by a few of us sitting down together and arriving at conclusions which will help us to satisfy the people of India. You are aware that if you leave things as they are the Government of India is not able to carry on the administration so far as finances are concerned. It is in a sorry plight and it will be in a worse plight from day to day as far as I can see. You cannot go on adding taxation to taxation. But little margin was left and it has come now. There is no other course open to the Government of India than to reduce expenditure and to reduce it largely. If you give us a constitution, but tie us hand and foot by your safeguards, what will be the result? The result will be that the new Government will not have a fair chance. I am not opposed to such reasonable safeguards as may be agreed on in the interests of India. We have from the beginning agreed that there should be such safeguards, but I am pointing out generally that it is essential that the safeguards should be only those needed in the interests of India. It is also agreed that we shall be just to every community. We do not want to hurt any community, British or non-British. We shall be just to every interest.

A great responsibility rests upon the British Parliament and upon you all who represent the British public. Three hundred and fifty million people inhabit India. Their destiny is entrusted for the moment to your hands. You are not able to give the time and

attention that affairs in India demand. I do not complain of that. God never meant that the people of one country should be able to spend time in attending to the administrative affairs of another country, particularly of one so far away. Therefore, it is all the more necessary that you should agree to hand over power to us, to put us in the position in which we can perform those duties to our people which it is your privilege to discharge towards your own people. We want to know that that is coming, and the people will not be satisfied until we are able to tell them that it is coming without avoidable delay.

The suggestion that there should be a declaration made assuring the people of India that the Government stands by the pledge that it gave through you last year will not satisfy the people. Nor will it satisfy the people to tell them that it will take two or three years to frame a new constitution. With all respect to my lawyer friends and to Parliamentary draftsmen, I venture to say that that is too long a period, that when it is desired that responsible government is to be introduced in India it should be possible to frame a Statute for it within a much shorter time, within a reasonably short period. I submit that that is what should be done. It may be urged that there are difficulties in the case of the Princes, that there are certain matters to be investigated and that until they have been investigated a constitution cannot be built up. I beg to submit that the vital points which are necessary to frame a constitution have been agreed upon and that a constitution can be drafted and that any adjustments which may be necessary can be introduced later on.

What is essential is that the people should be told that the Government have decided finally that responsible government shall be established in India without avoidable delay. I submit that it is also necessary that along with such a declaration action should be taken to convince the people that you mean what you say. When the Declaration of 1917 was made, Mr. Montagu went out to make certain investigations, and he and Lord Chelmsford made investigations and submitted a report, and the Statute followed. What is wanted is a definite pronouncement of agreement on vital points. An agreement should be arrived at, and it should be announced what the agreement arrived at is. Immediately after it there should be sent out to India a small influential deputation. I should invite you, Mr. Prime Minister, yourself to come out; I should invite Lord Sankey to come out; I should invite Mr. Baldwin to come out; and Mr. Lloyd George. I suggest that three of your Prime Ministers and *ex*-Prime Ministers should come out to India. Lord Sankey should come out, as he has studied this question for the last twelve months, and he is, therefore, most competent to help us in this matter. I suggest that you come out to India for three months. This is the time of the winter. Your climate does not encourage any one to stay here during the months of December, January and February. Within three months' time, if three of you top men of England will come to my warmer country and sit down and hear what you want to hear and investigate whatever you want to investigate, you will come back satisfied that it is possible to go on with

the framing of the Statute much earlier than it is imagined in some quarters at present. This is my invitation to you. I am most anxious, Mr. Prime Minister, that my country should be saved the trouble of any further agitation in this connection. None of us wants it. We feel that we have carried on agitation long enough, that we have satisfied you and everyone else that the people of India are rightly impatient. I believe that the best among you have understood and will admit that we people of India have as much a right to freedom as you have, and I hope that you are satisfied by all that you have heard and seen that the people of India are now different from what the people of India were ten years ago. There is a wave of intense feeling in the country which will not tolerate delay in this matter. I say it in order that you should understand the situation and that we should all try to meet that situation. The people will not be satisfied; they have long been complaining of excessive expenditure on their administration. They know that millions of them cannot find employment. Vast millions are going through life not having sufficient necessaries. They are undergoing much trouble and suffering. They cannot continue to go on in this condition. You hear of crimes here, there and elsewhere. I condemn these crimes, I deplore them, but we must know that part of it is due to the distressing want of employment among the young men in the country. I have seen numerous cases of young men whose parents have given them, out of their scanty income, a college education, and who are not able to find employment to support their old parents and their young wife after twenty years of education. The number of such men is large. The number of middle-class men who are undergoing suffering is larger. The number of men among the massses undergoing suffering is much larger still. It does not behove England to allow all this suffering to go on when it is possible to provide means of avoiding it, of reducing it, of preventing it so far as it is possible to do so, by transferring power to hands which are willing and anxious to take up the responsibility and to discharge that responsibility.

I therefore submit that what is needed at this juncture is not merely a report of the speeches which have been delivered but of an agreement between us that things which are now agreed on shall be carried out and a determination after that agreement to take the earlier steps to implement those decisions. That is what India needs, and I beg most earnestly to impress upon all my British friends that this is the necessity of the situation in India and I hope that by pursuing the path of the duty which is cast upon you you will pursue the way to glory again as you did on so many occasions in the past. You have fought for the liberty of other peoples. My people also fought with you for the liberty of other peoples in the Great War. You will still remember how our men came and helped you. Over a million men came, and there were more than a hundred thousand casualties in the War, of Indians killed or injured. Remember all the contributions that India made in the last war. Remember all the contributions which India has made

in all the wars of the Empire in which Indian soldiers have been engaged. Remember also the manner in which the Indian people have been urging, entreating, imploring the British Government for the last forty-five years to give the people of India freedom to exercise the power of self-government. Remembering all that, help us to obtain that power. Transfer that power to us and we shall be very very grateful to you; the people of India will be happy and will be grateful to you, and the world at large will admire you.

Mr. Prime Minister, if the opportunity is missed and we are sent back without having the assurance that the vital points of the new constitution are agreed upon, if we go back disappointed and are not able to satisfy our people that this new constitution of freedom is coming into existence at an early date, I shudder to think of the consequences. The Government is strong, no doubt; the Government can carry on repression; it can put down all agitation with a strong hand. Yes, you can do so for a time; no doubt you have the power to do so. But it will be very, very wrong of you to do so when it can be avoided. None of us desires that people should rise against the Government; we all want that the law should be respected; but the law also should respect the liberty of the individual and should give the individual what he has a right to claim from the Government. That is all we ask for. We pray that you should give up the idea of merely governing India. You must make up your minds to carry on the Administration in India, even during the time that you do not transfer responsibility to our hands, with the willing consent of the people. When Mr. Balfour went, a few years ago, to America, he said the only government worth the name was a government which was carried on with the consent of the people. Here now is the opportunity for you. Here is the opportunity for you to decide that you will transfer power into our hands. I pray to God that He may grant you wisdom, generosity, and the strength to do so, and thereby to earn the gratitude of my people.

Mr. Sastri: Mr. Prime Minister, it will be within the recollection of all of you that when we began the deliberations of this Conference we said often, and nobody failed to say, that the assent that we have given to any proposals was conditional, that we were free to revise our judgments as the proceedings went on and the picture became clearer and clearer.

We had hoped that we should be able to know exactly what the proposed constitution was; and, Prime Minister, I cannot help feeling how profitable, how pointed to certain definite propositions, our two days' debate would have been if the statement that is to be made to-morrow had been made early enough, and we had all been discussing things that had been stated on authority.

As it is, most of us are speaking upon uneasy speculations which have been started in our minds by rumour. One such rumour, which I think was voiced in the Committee for the first time by my friend Sir A. P. Patro, has been perhaps put out of the field altogether; at any rate we hope so. But my friend Sir A. P. Patro

is very resourceful; one of his ideas being put out of the field, he has just ventured upon another, that the halfway house so much desired by certain people here should be Provincial autonomy at the circumference, with responsibility at the Centre of British India, the States being kept out for some time.

Well, people have taken the idea and begun to discuss it. For some hours I said to myself: "Now, this is Sir A. P. Patro's idea; why should I bother about it?" and then I remembered that my friend has an uncanny gift of discovering ideas still below the horizon long before other people see them. It may be, I thought, that there is some truth in that rumour and it is just as well to deal with it.

Prime Minister, that will not do either. When we started this Conference we came, no doubt, with ideas of arguing for Dominion Status for British India, but we had not been here many days before the magnificent action of the Princes made a wider and a larger India possible. We have all yielded our hearts to that great ideal. Our whole deliberations have been framed on the supposition that the Princes would come in, and I know nothing now to the contrary. It is a pity to ask us to go back to the original and smaller idea. I shall leave that subject there, hoping that we shall still be permitted to contemplate this vision of an India including the Princes and their States going forward as a Dominion from strength to strength, and taking her place amongst the sisterhood of the nations of the great Commonwealth.

Then I was greatly comforted to hear that Lord Reading, to whom this Conference owes so much of its prestige and of its success, did not waiver one little bit in his adherence to the idea of an all-India Federation. From Lord Reading's speech, Prime Minister, we have derived many points of encouragement. I was particularly struck in the great speech he made recently, with a note which was rather unnecessary from him, but which was quite emphatic, his faith in this British Commonwealth and his loyalty to its ideals. Nobody ever questioned that Lord Reading would be faithful to the ideal of the Empire. If some of us on this side had made a similar confession of faith, that would have been interesting! I am one of those who, amidst much adverse criticism, have often made that confession of faith with honesty and with genuine trust.

Prime Minister, what is wanting in our loyalty to the Commonwealth is not admiration of its greatness or of its material glory, but it is the lack of occasion for us to take pride in this Empire and to call it our own. The one thing wanting is that you should place us upon an equality with the self-governing parts of the Commonwealth. We have asked for that status for a long, long time, and although I do not wish to be so unfaithful to history as to say you have done nothing whatever, and although I am grateful for the steps you have taken from time to time to realise this ideal, it must be admitted that the progress has been slow and fitful. The time has now come for you to take one long step from which there shall

be no returning. Your Government—I mean your late Labour Government—was pledged to that ideal. You made your answer at that time, declared it to the people of India, and they have come here to realise it, believing that that declaration contained their greatest charter.

Now it seems to me that in fulfilling that declaration nothing should be done beyond what is absolutely necessary and unavoidable. Nothing should be done to mark us off, especially to our disadvantage, from the other self-governing parts of the Empire. There, Prime Minister, is the great danger to be guarded against. We are willing, as I said before, some of us here—I think most of us—we are willing that there should be certain subjects marked off for the time being as Crown subjects in respect of which the Indian Legislature of the future, although Federal, should not be supreme but the Imperial Parliament which has hitherto taken charge of those subjects. That must be subject of course to a period of time that must be made known and subject also to certain large aspects of these questions which might be transferred with safety to our Legislature. They are necessary reservations, but we must be on our guard to admit into the Constitution no other safeguard or reservation, by whatever title it be called, which could not be demonstrated to be anything but in India's interest. We have now in the reports several safeguards under the headings of Commercial Discrimination and Defence. I objected to them, I am not quite happy about them now. In my judgment, Prime Minister, they are unnecessary and irritating deductions from Dominion Status.

There are ways in which these safeguards could be obtained in substance without our Constitution being disfigured by constitutional provisions. Last year when we were discussing these problems we took up one position from which—I do not know for what reason—we have advanced still further in the direction of stiffening them. One remark I will make which I made in the Federal Structure Committee. The Commercial Discrimination clause debated last year seemed to me, as it seemed to those who took part in its framing, to answer all the needs of the case. That was to be based upon a reciprocity agreement. Why this year it should be stipulated that it should take the form of legal provisions and written in the statute of our Constitution I am unable still to see. No Dominion Constitution has such a clause, but it is proposed seriously that the Indian Constitution should start with that clause written into the Constitution at the outset and so with regard to certain financial safeguards. I have no objection to these provisions themselves on their intrinsic merits, but they are a blot on the face of our Constitution. When I meet my fellow-citizens of other Dominions and I pat myself on the back and tell them "Well, I am a Dominion too, subject only to two great exceptions" they will be able to turn round to me and say "No, my friend, it is not Army and External Affairs only that still continue to be under the charge of the Imperial Government. Your control over your own Commerce and Industry; your control over the vital life-breath of the

whole of your national life, Finance—both means are under the control of the Parliament of Great Britain and Ireland. You are not and will not be for a long time as we are." That is what I am most sensitive about. Why should these unnecessary restrictions be written into the Constitution? There they are. Prime Minister, I have been no party to those secret and intimate confabulations which led to the framing of these safeguards in their present form. Without such esoteric knowledge my criticism might appear to be crude and even lacking in a sense of responsibility, but my mind is quite clear upon the subject, and if they must be given in the Constitution, I will make two suggestions to you which would take away the sting and the offence of such disabling provisions. One suggestion is that you will put these restrictions into that chapter of the Constitution which will be open to revision and modification by the Indian Legislature without the necessity of coming to the Imperial Parliament for dealing with them. We do not like the idea of coming to this country and asking for constitutional advance any more. There is Defence, there is External Affairs and there is Paramountcy belonging to the State—quite enough matters to make trouble between India and England for another generation. Need we add more?—for, as you know from your rich experience, so long as these irritating clauses are there in the constitution, every general election in India will be fought upon that issue. Ignorant candidates will play on the minds of even more ignorant voters and tell them: " we are not a free country so long as these clauses are there in the constitution." Let us get rid of them. Our minds will be concentrated on these particular provisions, although in the real national life of India they may not act as great impediments. The very fact that they are there will turn people's minds to them and will make progress in other vital directions very very difficult.

The other suggestion which I would make is that you should enter a clause in the Instrument of Instructions which each Viceroy receives on appointment, to the effect that the safeguarding of powers vested in him singly as apart from his Cabinet in India, that those safeguarding powers must be exercised solely in the interests of India. It is not as good as a provision in the constitution, there may be Viceroys of a stiff temperament who will disregard even this Instrument of Instructions. Nevertheless, upon the whole, it seems to me if it is declared to every Viceroy on his appointment that British policy requires these safeguarding powers to be exercised only in the interests of India, it would be a very great gain to those who watch over these things jealously in India. When we mentioned this matter last year I can say with authority that I was informed that Lord Reading would be in favour of the Instrument of Instructions containing such a provision.

A word about the future work of this Conference. This Conference dissolves, but its work cannot stop. We hear that an excellent move is contemplated; that the Lord Chancellor with a certain number of British politicians to assist him, should visit our country

and there keep alive in some form which may seem most appropriate this Round Table Conference or its child to carry on the work. We welcome such a proposal if it has taken shape; and there are one or two things that one would like to say about this. Prime Minister, do you remember that in January of this year when you made your great statement, there were two parts in it? In one part you gave us a formal statement with the authority of Government. The other and greater part contained your own admonition and exhortations to us. One passage in it which struck me then as remarkable, and which has never left my mind since, was to the effect that the work of the Conference could not be entrusted to the bureaucracy, whether in this country or in India, but must be carried on under the control of politicians. Your experience, Prime Minister, must have dictated that caution. For many years in the wilderness of private membership, now enlarged and corrected by some years of the most exalted and difficult office of the Empire, you have garnered this lesson, that noble political ideals, generous national aspirations, do not thrive in official bosoms. We non-officials engender them, cherish them, and know how to bring them to fruition. In the long corridors and haunts of the India Office and of the great Secretariat that we have built in New Delhi there are many dark places where these beautiful and moving ideals are apt to be strangled, or at least they will be delayed until they have no further significance to those who have been deeply interested in them. We have had the very sad instance of a committee that sat recently in India and considered a most vital subject and, as has often been stated before us here, brought it to grief. They neglected your wise advice, Prime Minister. I really wish, although it should have been unnecessary, that in your statement to-morrow you would repeat that advice and put it into your formal declaration so that there could be no excuse for the authorities to put it aside. I think you ought to make it an injunction to those whose business it is to carry on the work of this Conference to nobler issues. You must make it incumbent on them to place their operations in the hands of the politicians and statesmen of India and the statesmen here, and not entrust them to the unenthusiastic, dry-as-dust hands of bureaucracy.

And, Prime Minister, when you constitute these commissions and important committees and entrust vital aspects to their charge, do as you did this year; summon Mahatma Gandhi and his associates to it; let him not in despair go back to the arid fields of non-co-operation.

Yes, Mahatma, if I may apostrophise you, forgetting for a moment the Prime Minister, your duty hereafter is with us. You have acquired an unparalleled reputation. Your influence is unequalled. Your spiritual power to command men and to raise them above themselves is acknowledged all over the world. Shall not these great gifts be harnessed to the constructive work of the nation? Have you the heart, I ask you, still to lead your people, trustful and obedient, through the valley of humiliation if it be not necessary—and I contend it is no longer necessary? The steps that we have

taken so far round this table mark a distinct stage in advance. It may not be as satisfactory as you wish. It is certainly not as satisfactory as I wish. Nevertheless, it seems to me that you and I and other friends here, working together, can frame this constitution and so shape it that while deriving the most that it can yield we can also look forward with confidence to a future when we shall be enabled to perfect it, and that at no distant date.

The thing is in our hands to-day. This Imperial Parliament, dominated as it may be by a Conservative majority, this Imperial Parliament in its debates to-morrow and the day after will set its *imprimatur*, I am perfectly assured, on the declaration that the Prime Minister makes to-morrow a few hours from now. Yes, and when that work is done, believe me, Mahatma, that in your hands more than those of any other single Indian lies our future progress. Remember the days when some of us here ran between Raisina and Daryagunj, bringing Lord Irwin and you together in mutual understanding and mutual co-operation. Yes, it seems to me that you cannot but have seen during these several weeks that you have worked with us that there is some knowledge, some wisdom, some patriotism even outside the ranks of the Congress which you so much worship. We can be of some use to you. Take us in hand. Do not dismiss us as people whose ideas are still evolving and may be long in reaching the heights of Congress wisdom. Believe me that with you and your chosen associates we can fashion our constitution to great ends, and India will have cause to be truly thankful that you changed your plans and came here. For the work of a great country like India, a growing nation like our people, lies in many directions. There is not one road to the salvation of our people, and patriotism takes many shapes and works in diverse ways according as circumstances may require. The circumstances to-day demand that you should change your plans, dismiss civil disobedience from your mind and take up this work in a spirit of complete trust in us and of faith in the British people, too. I want to tell you this. I have read some history, and, believe me, the British people often do wrong, the British people often take unwise courses. Nevertheless, in the long run they come back to the ways of reason, moderation and justice. This is one of the occasions when it seems to me that they are in their most winning and admirable mood. Take them now and victory is ours.

Chairman : We now come to the end of these sittings, and it only remains for me to-morrow to make the Government statement and to say to you au revoir. Although it is after two o'clock in the morning, I cannot leave this Chair without one word of tribute to that magnificent statement to which we have just listened. That statement shows an insight into the heart of India; but, my friends, it does more than that; it shows an insight into the heart of Great Britain, and, approached in that way, your approach is bound to be irresistible.

(The Conference adjourned at 2-15 a.m.)

Loyal Message to His Majesty the King-Emperor.

Chairman : You know with what great interest *His Majesty the* King-Emperor has followed the deliberations of this Conference, and I am sure you would wish that an expression of your loyal devotion to the King-Emperor should go from this Conference before it adjourns to-morrow.

May I, therefore, propose that this message should be sent to the King-Emperor in your name:—

> "The Delegates to the Indian Round Table Conference with their humble duty to Your Majesty desire to tender to Your Majesty their loyal and heartfelt gratitude for the gracious favours they have once more received at Your Majesty's hands. They are deeply conscious of Your Majesty's unfailing solicitude for the well-being of the Princes and *people of their* Motherland, and they believe Your Majesty needs no assurance that in no other part of Your Realm is there a livelier sense of loyalty and devotion to Your Majesty's Throne and Person."

Then I shall see that that is done, and I hope to-morrow morning I shall be able to communicate a message from His Majesty to the Conference.

FIANL PLENARY SESSION, 1st DECEMBER, 1931.

Reply from His Majesty the King-Emperor to Loyal Message.

Chairman : Your Highnesses, Ladies and Gentlemen, my first duty is to communicate to the Conference His Majesty the King-Emperor's reply to our address of yesterday:—

"The Delegates to the Indian Round Table Conference. I have received with much satisfaction your loyal message, and I send you my best wishes for a safe return to your Motherland.

I am not unaware of the difficulties brought to light by a close examination of the great task to which you set your hands last year, but I bid you not to let them discourage nor oppress you, and I earnestly trust that under your guidance the great communities of India will pursue with patience and forbearance the path of co-operation and of peaceful discussion to which your endeavours have so clearly shown the way."

That is signed by his own hand.

*STATEMENT BY THE PRIME MINISTER.

We have now had two Sessions of the Round Table Conference, and the time has come to survey the important work which has been done, first of all, in setting out the problems which in the task of Indian constitution-building we have to surmount, and then in trying to find how to surmount them. The reports presented to us now bring our co-operation to the end of another stage, and we must pause and study what has been done and the obstacles which we have encountered, and the best ways and means of bringing our work to a successful end as rapidly as possible. I regard our discussions and our personal contacts here as of the highest value, and make bold to say that they have raised the problem of Indian constitutional reform far above the mere technicalities of constitution-making; for we have won that confidence in, and respect for, each other which has made the task one of helpful political co-operation. That, I am confident, will continue to the end. By co-operation alone can we succeed.

At the beginning of the year I made a declaration of the policy of the then Government, and I am authorised by the present one to give you and India a specific assurance that it remains their policy. I shall repeat the salient sentences of that declaration:—

"The view of His Majesty's Government is that responsibility for the government of India should be placed upon

* The passages in the statement shown in square brackets [ ] were added by way of explanation in the course of the speech, which differs to this extent from the version published separately as a White Paper (Cmd. 3972).

Legislatures, Central and Provincial, with such provisions as may be necessary to guarantee, during a period of transition, the observance of certain obligations and to meet other special circumstances, and also with such guarantees as are required by minorities to protect their political liberties and rights.

In such statutory safeguards as may be made for meeting the needs of the transitional period, it will be a primary concern of His Majesty's Government to see that the reserved powers are so framed and exercised as not to prejudice the advance of India through the new constitution to full responsibility for her own government."

With regard to the Central Government, I made it plain that, subject to defined conditions, His Majesty's late Government were prepared to recognise the principle of the responsibility of the Executive to the Legislature, if both were constituted on an all-India Federal basis. The principle of responsibility was to be subject to the qualification that, in existing circumstances, Defence and External Affairs must be reserved to the Governor-General, and that, in regard to finance such conditions must apply as would ensure the fulfilment of the obligations incurred under the authority of the Secretary of State, and the maintenance unimpaired of the financial stability and credit of India.

Finally, it was our view that the Governor-General must be granted the necessary powers to enable him to fulfil his responsibility for securing the observance of the constitutional rights of Minorities, and for ultimately maintaining the tranquillity of the State.

These were, in broad outline, the features of the new constitution for India as contemplated by His Majesty's Government at the end of the last Conference.

As I say, my colleagues in His Majesty's present Government fully accept that statement of January last as representing their own policy. In particular, they desire to reaffirm their belief in an all-India Federation as offering the only hopeful solution of India's constitutional problem. They intend to pursue this plan unswervingly and to do their utmost to surmount the difficulties which now stand in the way of its realisation. In order to give this declaration the fullest authority, the statement which I am now making to you will be circulated to-day as a White Paper to both Houses of Parliament, and the Government will ask Parliament to approve it this week.

The discussions which have been proceeding during the past two months have been of value in showing us more precisely the problems we have to solve, and have advanced us towards the solution of some of them. But they have also made it plain that others still require further examination and co-operative consideration. There is still difference of opinion, for instance, as to the composition and powers of the Federal Legislature, and I regret

that owing to the absence of a settlement of the key question of how to safeguard the Minorities under a responsible Central Government, the Conference has been unable to discuss effectively the nature of the Federal Executive and its relationship with the Legislature. Again, it has not yet been possible for the States to settle amongst themselves their place in the Federation and their mutual relationships within it. Our common purpose will not be advanced by ignoring these facts, nor by assuming that the difficulties they present will somehow solve themselves. Further thought, discussion and reconciliation of different interests and points of view are still required before we can translate broad general aims into the detailed machinery of a workable constitution. I am not saying this to indicate impossibility, nor to foreshadow any pause in our work. I only wish to remind you that we have put our hands to a task which demands alike from His Majesty's Government and from the leaders of Indian opinion care, courage and time, lest when the work is done it may bring confusion and disappointment, and instead of opening the way to political progress may effectively bar it. We must build like good craftsmen, well and truly; our duty to India demands that from all of us.

What then is the general position in which we find ourselves as regards a practical programme for the advancement of our common aims? I want no more general declarations which carry us no further in our work. The declarations already made and repeated to-day are enough to give confidence in the purpose of the Government and to provide work for the Committees to which I shall refer. I want to keep to business. The great idea of all-India Federation still holds the field. The principle of a responsible Federal Government, subject to certain reservations and safeguards through a transition period, remains unchanged. And we are all agreed that the Governors' Provinces of the future are to be responsibly governed units, enjoying the greatest possible measure of freedom from outside interference and dictation in carrying out their own policies in their own sphere.

I should explain at once in connection with that last point that we contemplate as one feature of the new order that the North-West Frontier Province should be constituted a Governor's Province, of the same status as other Governors' Provinces, but with due regard to the necessary requirements of the Frontier, and that, as in all other Governors' Provinces, the powers entrusted to the Governor to safeguard the safety and tranquillity of the Province shall be real and effective.

His Majesty's Government also accept in principle the proposition which was endorsed at the last Conference that Sind should be constituted a separate Province, if satisfactory means of financing it can be found. We therefore intend to ask the Government of India to arrange for a Conference with representatives of Sind for the purpose of trying to overcome the difficulties disclosed by the report of the expert financial investigation which has just been completed.

But I have digressed from the question of a programme in the light of the accepted factors—Federation as the aim and self-governing Provinces and the Indian States as its basis. As I have said, our discussions have made it clear to all of us that Federation cannot be achieved in a month or two. There is a mass of difficult constructive work still to be done, and there are important agreements to be sought by which the structure must be shaped and cemented. It is equally plain that the framing of a scheme of responsible government for the Provinces would be a simpler task which could be more speedily accomplished. The adjustments and modifications of the powers now exercised by the Central Government which would obviously have to be made in order to give real self-government to the Provinces should raise no insuperable difficulties. It has, therefore, been pressed upon the Government that the surest and speediest route to Federation would be to get these measures in train forthwith, and not to delay the assumption of full responsibility by the Provinces a day longer than is necessary. But it is clear that a partial advance does not commend itself to you. You have indicated your desire that no change should be made in the constitution which is not effected by one all-embracing Statute covering the whole field, and His Majesty's Government have no intention of urging a responsibility which, for whatever reasons, is considered at the moment premature or ill-advised. It may be that opinion and circumstances will change, and it is not necessary here and now to take any irrevocable decision. We intend, and have always intended, to press on with all possible despatch with the Federal plan. It would clearly be indefensible, however, to allow the present decision to stand in the way of the earliest possible constitutional advance in the North-West Frontier Province. We intend, therefore, to take the necessary steps as soon as may be to apply to the North-West Frontier Province, until the new constitutions are established, the provisions of the present Act relating to Governors' Provinces.

We must all, however, realise that there stands in the way of progress, whether for the Provinces or the Centre, that formidable obstacle, the communal deadlock. I have never concealed from you my conviction that this is above all others a problem for you to settle by agreement amongst yourselves. The first of the privileges and the burdens of a self-governing people is to agree how the democratic principle of representation is to be applied—or, in other words, who are to be represented and how it is to be done. This Conference has twice essayed this task; twice it has failed. I cannot believe that you will demand that we shall accept these failures as final and conclusive.

But time presses. We shall soon find that our endeavours to proceed with our plans are held up (indeed they have been held up already) if you cannot present us with a settlement acceptable to all parties as the foundations upon which to build. In that event His Majesty's Government would be compelled to apply a provisional scheme, for they are determined that even this disability shall not be permitted to be a bar to progress. This would mean

that His Majesty's Government would have to settle for you, not only your problems of representation, but also to decide as wisely and justly as possible what checks and balances the constitution is to contain to protect minorities from an unrestricted and tyrannical use of the democratic principle expressing itself solely through majority power. I desire to warn you that if the Government have to supply even temporarily this part of your constitution which you are unable to supply for yourselves, and though it will be our care to provide the most ample safeguards for minorities so that none of them need feel that they have been neglected, it will not be a satisfactory way of dealing with this problem. Let me also warn you that if you cannot come to an agreement on this amongst yourselves, it will add considerably to the difficulties of any Government here which shares our views of an Indian Constitution, and it will detract from the place which that Constitution will occupy amongst those of other nations. I therefore beg of you once more to take further opportunities to meet together and present us with an agreement.

We intend to go ahead. We have now brought our business down to specific problems which require close and intimate consideration, first of all by bodies which are really committees and not unwieldy conferences, and we must now set up machinery to do this kind of work. As that is being done and conclusions presented, we must be able to continue consultations with you. I propose, therefore, with your consent, to nominate in due course a small representative committee—a working committee—of this Conference which will remain in being in India, with which, through the Viceroy, we can keep in effective touch. I cannot here and now specify precisely how this committee can best be employed. This is a matter which must be worked out and must to some extent depend on the reports of the committees we propose to set up. But in the end, we shall have to meet again for a final review of the whole scheme.

[The plan, in a word, is this—I would like you to carry it in your minds—that these two Sessions have provided now a mass of details. You have sketched out in a general way the kind of constitution; then you have said: This wing of it, that wing of it, that aspect of it, has not yet been drawn in detail by any architect; and we now have to consider the stresses and the strains that will be put upon the fabric, the best way to protect it, to safeguard it and to carry it. With that material in front of us, we appoint this Committee, that Committee and the other Committees to study the matter and to produce proposals for us for dealing with them. That is what you would call the detailed work that must be pursued; and you know perfectly well, my friends, that a Conference as large as this, or a Committee as large as some of those Committees that have been meeting under the Chairmanship of the Lord Chancellor cannot do that work. There are too many long speeches. There are too many written speeches. There is not enough intimate, practical and pointed exchange of view, sharp across a table without ten-minute speeches—two seconds' observation met by another two

seconds' observation. Only in that way are you going to work it out. But whilst this is being done we have to keep in contact with what I would call the large representative political body, a body of this nature, a body which this typifies. That is the plan, the conception of His Majesty's Government, of quick, effective, scientific and certain work in the building up of the great constitution of India to which reference has been made.]

It is our intention to set up at once the Committees whose appointment the Conference has recommended; (*a*) to investigate and advise on the revision of the franchise and constituencies; [that must be done and that has got to be worked out in detail and it has got to be done on the spot, not seven thousand miles away;] (*b*) to put to the test of detailed budgetary facts and figures the recommendations of the Federal Finance sub-Committee; and (*c*) to explore more fully the specific financial problems arising in connection with certain individual States. [These three Committees have been requested already by you and they will be set up immediately. When I say immediately, do not imagine that it is going to be done to-morrow. But it is going to be done at the end of this month, perhaps, or the turn of the year.] We intend that these Committees shall be at work in India under the chairmanship of distinguished public men from this country as early in the New Year as possible. The views expressed by you here on the other outstanding Federal problems will be taken into consideration at once, and the necessary steps taken to get better understanding and agreement upon them.

His Majesty's Government have also taken note of the suggestion made in paragraph 26 of the Federal Structure Committee's Third Report, with the object of facilitating an early decision on the distribution among the States of whatever quota may be agreed upon for their representation in the Legislature. It follows from what I have already said that they share the general desire for an early agreement on this question among the States, and His Majesty's Government intend to afford the Princes all possible assistance by way of advice in this matter. If it appears to the Government that there is likely to be undue delay in their reaching agreement amongst themselves, the Government will take such steps as seem helpful to obtain a working settlement.

I have already alluded to another matter to which you have given ample evidence that you attach great importance, and to which you will expect me to refer. A decision of the communal problem which provides only for representation of the communities in the Legislatures is not enough to secure what I may call "natural rights." When such provisions have been made, minorities will still remain minorities, and the constitution must therefore contain provisions which will give all creeds and classes a due sense of security that the principle of majority government is not to be employed to their moral or material disadvantage in the body politic. The Government cannot undertake here and now to specify in detail what those provisions should be. Their form and scope

will need the most anxious and careful consideration with a view to ensuring on the one hand that they are reasonably adequate for their purpose, and on the other that they do not encroach, to an extent which amounts to stultification, upon the principles of representative responsible government. In this matter the Committee of Consultation should play an important part for, here also, just as in regard to the method and proportions of electoral representation, it is vital to the success of the new constitution that it should be framed on a basis of mutual agreement.

Now, once again we must bid each other good-bye [for a time. We shall meet individually, and we shall meet, I hope, on Committees, in unity carrying on this work to which we have set our hands—not we in the sense of His Majesty's Government, but we in the sense of you and us together.] Great strides have been made, greater, I am sure you will find, than the most optimistic think. I was glad to hear in the course of these debates speaker after speaker taking that view. It is the true view. [These Conferences have not been failures in any sense of the term. These Conferences had to meet; these Conferences had to come up against obstacles; these Conferences had to be the means by which diversity of opinion had to be expressed; these Conferences enabled us not only to mobilise the goodwill of India and England, but also enabled us to mobilise the great problems, the historical problems of India. Those problems have enabled us all—you and we together—to come down and face hard reality, and to gather from mutual conference the spirit and the determination to overcome difficulties.] We have met with obstacles, but one of those optimists to whom humanity owes most of its progress said that "obstacles were made to be overcome." In that buoyancy of spirit and the goodwill which comes from it, let us go on with our task. My fairly wide experience of Conferences like this is that the road to agreements is very broken and littered with obstructions to begin with, and the first stages often fill one with despair. But quite suddenly, and generally unexpectedly, the way smoothes itself out and the end is happily reached. I not only pray that such may be our experience, but I assure you that the Government will strive unceasingly to secure such a successful termination to our mutual labours.

Mr. Gandhi: Prime Minister and Friends, the privilege and the responsibility of moving a vote of thanks to the Chair have been entrusted to me, and I have taken up the responsibility and the privilege with the greatest pleasure. It is not expected of any single one of us, and least of all of me, that I should say on this occasion anything whatsoever about the weighty pronouncement to which we have all just listened. A chairman who conducts the proceedings of his meeting in a becoming and courteous manner is always entitled to a vote of thanks, whether those who compose the meeting agree with the decisions taken at the meeting, or with the decisions that may be given by the Chairman himself.

Sir, I know that yours was a double duty. You had not only to conduct the proceedings of the Conference with becoming dignity and with impartiality, but you had often to convey the decisions of His Majesty's Government. And your final act in the Chair has been to convey the considered decision of His Majesty's Government over the many matters on which this Conference has deliberated. I propose to omit that part of your task; but for me the pleasanter part is how you have conducted the proceedings, and let me congratulate you upon the lessons that you have given us so often in time-sense. Chairmen often neglect that very elementary duty, and I must confess in my country almost with tiresome regularity. We are not credited with proper time-sense. Prime Minister, it will be my pleasant and bounden duty to give to my countrymen when I return to India what the British Prime Minister has done in the matter of time-sense.

The other thing that you have shown us is your amazing industry. Brought up in your hardy Scotch climate, you have not known what rest is, and you have not allowed us also to know what rest is. With, shall I say, almost unexampled ferocity you worked everyone of us, including old men like my friend and revered brother Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya and equally old men like me. You have worked almost to exhaustion, with a pitilessness worthy of a Scotsman like you, my friend and revered leader, Mr. Sastri. You let us know yesterday that you knew his physical condition, but before a sense of duty you set aside all these personal considerations. All honour to you for that, and I shall treasure this amazing industry of yours.

But let me say on this matter that although I belong to a climate which is considered to be luxuriant, almost bordering on the equatorial regions, perhaps we might there be able to cross swords with you in industry, but that does not matter. If what you gave us yesterday, if that is only a foretaste of what you are capable of—working even for a full twenty-four hours as your House of Commons has done at times—well then, of course, you will take the palm.

Therefore I have the greatest pleasure in moving this vote of thanks. But there is an additional reason, and it is perhaps a greater reason why I should shoulder this responsibility and esteem the privilege that has been given to me. It is somewhat likely—I would say only somewhat likely, because I would like to study your declaration, once, twice, thrice, as often as it may be necessary, scanning every word of it, reading its hidden meaning—if there is a hidden meaning in it—crossing all the t's, dotting all the i's, before I come to a conclusion—that so far as I am concerned we have come to the parting of the ways, that our ways take different directions; it does not matter to us. Even so, you are entitled to my hearty and most sincere vote of thanks. It is not given to us in this society of ours for all to agree in order to respect one another. It is not given to us always to expect meticulous regard for each other's opinions and always to be accommodating so that

there is no principle left with you. On the contrary, dignity of human nature requires that we must face the storms of life, and sometimes even blood brothers have got to go each his own way, but if at the end of their quarrel—at the end of their differences—they can say that they bore no malice, and that even so they acted as becomes a gentleman, a soldier—if it will be possible at the end of the chapter for me to say that of myself and of my countrymen, and if it is possible for me to say that of you, Prime Minister, and of your countrymen, I will say that we parted also well. I do not know. I do not know in what directions my path will lie, but it does not matter to me in what direction that path lies. Even then, although I may have to go in an exactly opposite direction, you are still entitled to a vote of thanks from me from the bottom of my heart.

Sir Abdul Qaiyum: Mr. Prime Minister, a sort of whisper came into my ear that I must have the honour of seconding this vote of thanks to you, and it at once reminded me of that Persian couplet which says,

> " Asmán bar-i-amánat natawanist kashid
> Qurai fál ba námi man i diwána Zadand."

A Delegate: Translate.

Sir Abdul Qaiyum: I cannot make a very good translation. It is really meant for Mrs. Naidu to translate that for me, as the Nightingale of India; but it means, " The burden of responsibility which could not be borne even by heaven has fallen on the shoulders of this half-lunatic or full lunatic." It comes to me like a dream, because I had already been overwhelmed with the announcement about the fate of my Province, and when this extraordinary honour of seconding the vote of thanks and following in the footsteps of the great Mahatma fell to my lot, I did not know the bounds of my happiness and my honour.

Sir, I most sincerely and heartily second this vote of thanks which is going to be presented on behalf of the Conference by the Mahatma. The great labours in which you have been engaged for nearly a year in connection with the holding of these Conferences, and the great patience and toleration which you have shown in listening to these long and sometimes out-of-order speeches, show how great is your sympathy with the aspirations of India and how anxious you are to meet their wishes.

Sir, the statement which you have just made on behalf of the British Government is very, very clear, and, at least to men of my way of thinking, is quite satisfactory. It may not have satisfied every member of the Conference, but there is one from a far-off corner of India who feels quite satisfied with the fate of his own Province.

There has been a great deal of delay in the consideration of our case, but there is a saying that a cow cannot be considered as lost when it returns to its home even after three days, and to me this is the greatest pleasure, because when I undertook this work I

never expected that I should see the end of it in my own lifetime. These things do take a very long time, and I am glad that the opportunity arose which brought us here to England to discuss the affairs of India, and that my own little case also came into prominence.

I am not only grateful to you, Sir, but also to your Government of last year and to the present Government of Great Britain, and to all the Members of the Conference who have supported me or at least have helped me by not raising any objection against the case I put forward. I refer in particular to the Mahatma, who only last night supported the case as just, as I expected that he would, but I am not less grateful to my old friend, Dr. Moonje, who has never raised any objection at all.

I wish I had the command of language like my friend Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, or the two friends sitting next to him, so that I might say how grateful I feel at present for this great boon which has been shown to our Province. But I will make one request. I heard some such words in your statement, Sir, as: "With due regard to the requirements of the defence of the Frontier." That emboldens me to say that I hope that the best interpretation will always be put upon that clause, and that we shall be allowed, even if we commit occasional mistakes, every opportunity of having the experience of the new constitution which you have so kindly placed before us.

With these words I most heartily second the vote of thanks proposed by the Mahatma.

H.H. The Nawab of Bhopal: Prime Minister, it is my pleasant duty as well as my privilege to give our wholehearted support—the support of the Princes—to the vote of thanks to the Chair that has been moved. I am not going to make a speech; I think we would all like, for the time being at least, to avoid speeches. But I would say this much, that we of the States will continue wholeheartedly to co-operate with His Majesty's Government and with British India in the noble task of creating a greater India. We, the Princes, are most grateful to you, Sir, to the Lord Chancellor and to Sir Samuel Hoare, our Secretary of State, for all the courtesy, kindness and goodwill that has been shown to us by you all. We are, Sir, grateful to you and to every Englishman for the hospitality that has been shown to us. We are carrying back with us the happiest memories, and we hope that we shall soon meet again, perhaps this time in our own country where the bright sun will continue to shine on our deliberations and on the destinies of India and of England. The fortunes of our two countries have been insolubly united and this Conference has further strengthened the links, I hope for all times to come. It is in this spirit that we are returning to our homes. We wish to thank you once again.

(The vote of thanks was put to the Conference by the Lord Chancellor and was declared to be carried unanimously and with acclamation.)

Chairman: My Lords, Ladies and Gentlemen, the warmth of the reception you have given to this resolution touches me very much. There are a fairly good sprinkling of you who are old friends of mine, whom I have known for a good many years, and you know perfectly well how close to my heart lies India and the people of India, and how, as Lord Reading said yesterday, I should feel very happy indeed if, before the time comes, which comes to all of us when we have to take our hand from the plough and allow others to go on with the furrow, I could see such a settlement between India and this country as would make India content, would give reason for my own people to be proud of their capacity to handle a very delicate subject and would cement for all time the finest and the most spontaneous friendship between India and Great Britain. I hope that that will be so. In any event, you know with what heart and with what pleasure I found that on account of my position here I was to preside over the deliberations of this Conference. I do hope, my friends, we are going to go away determined to co-operate. It is no good going on any other path, let me assure you. History is full of adventures on that other path. But what have we been living for? Why has our race been in existence for centuries except to discard old paths and pursue new ones and better ones? The path of reason, the path of mutual goodwill, the path of the two peoples uniting together to make a road to an aim which we now profess together to have in common, is the path of the future, whatever may have been the path of the past.

I am so much obliged to Mahatma Gandhi for the very kind and friendly things he said in moving this resolution. There is only one thing I quarrel with him about, and I hope he will not consider it is a major thing, and I hope he will not have any misunderstandings about it. It is this. Why does he refer to himself, in relation to me, as an old man? Why, the Mahatma has got years to his advantage. It was a young man who spoke at 12 o'clock last night—a young man, a youth. It was an old man who sat in the chair and kept him at his work. Mr. Gandhi has got the advantage of youth compared with me. I do not know which of us looks the older—but if you turn up these records that lie not, the records of "Who's Who," and that sort of thing, you will discover that in the ordinary course of nature I am much nearer the end of my time than Mr. Gandhi himself.—("No, you are not, Sir")—and that if there is anybody who has got any grievance about prolonged sitting it is not the young man who spoke—as I see you all, smiling youths—it was the old man who presided over you and whom you kept out of bed until half-past two this morning and then made him get up at 6 o'clock this morning in order to come here with a prepared statement to read to you. That is where the grievance is. But, my friends, I have none—not a particle, not a shadow—if it has been in the interests of India and for the purpose of bringing you together.

There is only one thing more I want to say. I am so glad that my old friend opposite me (Sir Abdul Qaiyum) seconded the

resolution. It is a great achievement to get Mahatma Gandhi and him together. That is a foretaste of what is going to happen when Muslim and Hindu—

Mr. Gandhi: Not Hindu!

Chairman: Mr. Gandhi understands the lapses of an untrained human tongue.

Mr. Gandhi: I forgive it.

Chairman: He understands the lapses of an untrained human tongue such as mine, but the Mussulmans and the others came together. I am beginning to pick up Mr. Gandhi's thoughts, because he has always told us that you were sections and that he comprehended you all.

Mr. Gandhi: Of course!

The Chairman: But look at the effect of the two of you coming together in order to co-operate and express your gratitude to a Scotsman. My dear Mahatma, let us go on in this way; it is the best way; you may find it will be the only way. It is certainly a way that will enable both of us to take great pride in our work and to relate our political action with those glorious spiritual impulses which lie at the source of all our being.

One other thing. When the Mahatma takes the Chair in India, if he will let me know, I will come over and see whether he is an apt pupil of mine or not, whether he can enforce with energy and with success the " time-sense " for which he has been so kind and liberal in his praise of me this morning.

Well, a very good voyage home to you all! A very happy and very prosperous returning! And do remember that we are enlisted in the same cause, that we are bound by the same loyalty, the loyalty to India herself. Do remember to stand shoulder to shoulder with us, to exchange views, and by mutual co-operation, with good luck and good fortune, we shall solve the problems that now confront us and see India stand self-governing and self-respecting in the world.

For the last time, I declare that the Conference now adjourns.

(*The Conference terminated at 12-33 p.m.*)

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